ISSUE 39 • DECEMBER 1990

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Complete Gameboy guide... The software, the specs, the full story

TIMEWARP!

The Ultimate Games Experience is coming...

...AND I'LL BE SEEING YOU ON PAGE 39

GAMEBOY GIVEAWAY

£3500 worth of Gameboys up for grabs!

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COVERT ACTION, GREMLINS 2, WRATH OF THE DEMON, RANX, SHOCKWAVE...

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MONITORED BY WOULD-BE ASSASINS,
YOU DISCOVER THE SURREAL TRUTH -
YOU'RE NOT YOU -
YOU'RE ME
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"My centre is giving way, my right is in retreat; situation excellent. I shall attack."

Message from Marshal Foch to Joffre, 1914

Quoted in Emmanuel Strikneen's 'Famous Last Words', Snork and Snookums, 2005

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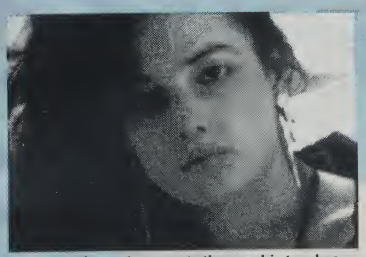
reviews

The latest releases on computer, console and CD are all given the authoritative ACE treatment...

Savage Empire: **find out what happens when the natives get *Ultima VI* gameplay on page 48**

Shockwave: **tremendous gameplay, tremendous spiret-based 3D routines and more on page 91**



Janine Hodgson-Jones puts the graphic touches to Matthew Stibbe's *'Nam* on page 43

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BOTTOMS UP!

Next month's issue is going to be so hot we just had to let you into a few of its secrets ahead of schedule. For a start, we've got a hilarious report from the US Gold conference, when ACE readers gathered in Birmingham and were greeted by...well, words fail us. The picture on the right should give you a hint of what to expect. Then we've got a red hot on-the-spot report from the Intertainment '90 conference in New York – a stunning expose of the future of interactive television, games, and on-line technology. If you're serious about gaming, then it's an issue you just mustn't miss.

Just one of the obscenities in next month's issue. Colonel Parkerton of Titmuss-on-Sea, you have been warned.

On the gameplay front, we'll be covering more games than ever before as well as providing in-depth hardware and software buyers' guides for the Christmas season – so if you're out for a game, a console, or a computer make sure you check with us first. There'll also be news of the next ACE conference (and how you can join us), a special 8-bit Christmas games guide, major 16-bit entertainment exclusives, and a huge quiz for games trivia fans with bags of prizes!

All that AND a Christmas freebie! ACE is really going to kick ass on its fortieth issue so don't monkey around: reserve *your* copy *now* on page 178!

Could this machine be the next big thing in British console gaming? After the success of the Master System and the Megadrive, ACE tests out the Sega handheld on page 8

IMPORTANT NOTICE

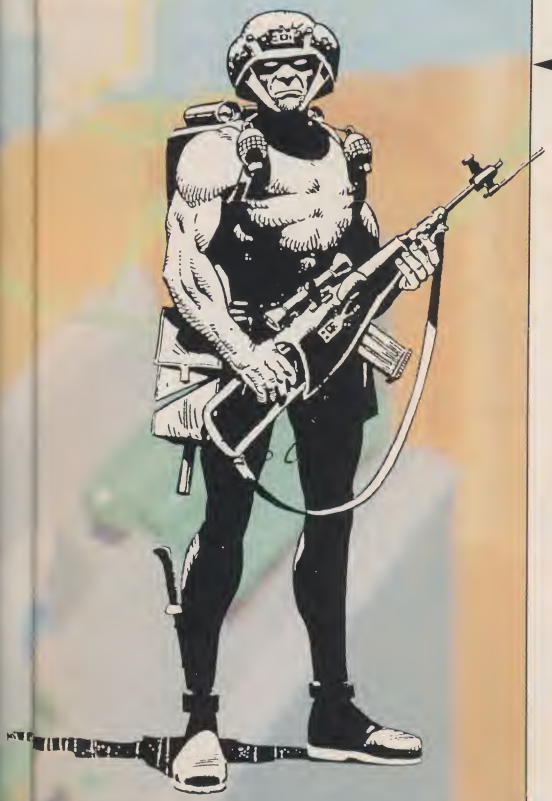
The publishers of ACE Magazine recognise that the contents of this issue may prove offensive, or even harmful, to certain people. Those of you who think that handheld gaming is a vicious, destructive habit may be disturbed by our intensive gametesting of the Sega Gamegear on page 8. You may also be appalled by our irresponsible distribution of 50 free Game Boys on page 25. Narrow minded bigots who insist that time travel is not possible will be outraged by our Gamesworld feature on page 19, and failed comic strip artists may conceivably shoot themselves at the sight of pages 38, 39 or 53. You have been warned. The rest of us can relax and have a stonking good read...

GOLDEN AXE

The conversion of the year? Find out on pages 30/31.

0898 AND OVERSEAS

Don't forget: as promised last month, the contents of the 0898 numbers for the £10000 software scratchcards are printed in this issue – and there's still time to claim your prize or discount. See page 26.



The face of the future. Face it on pages 19-21 in our timewarped feature about Gamesworld 1999.

ROGUE LOADS AND RUNS

...and so do Judge Dredd, Ranx Xerox, Hagar the Horrible, and Spiderman in the latest glut of comic-inspired scenarios. ACE takes a look at silicon strip art and wonders whether hot strips make for hot games on page 38.

ACE

DECEMBER 1990

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★ **PLUS...**
Adventureline...diary...crossword...mail order...competition winners...check out the ***full index*** on page 125.

KICK OFF 2

Amiga Screen Shots

A NEW DI[E
SOCCER SI[M

- BLISTERING PACE
- PIXEL PERFECT PASSING
- SUPERB TACTICAL GAMEPLAY

KICK OFF 2 greatly enhances the gameplay of KICK OFF, winner of the THE GAME OF THE YEAR in the U.K., and similar awards right across Europe. A host of new features have been added to the ones that enthralled players the world over.

* **Full size multi-directional scrolling pitch with the players, markings etc. in correct proportion.**
* **1 to 4 players option. (Amiga and ST only)**
* **2 players TEAM option against the computer or 2 other players. Hundreds of players each with a unique combination of attributes (stamina, pace, etc.) and skills (passing, shooting, tackling, etc.)**
* **Instinctive Kick Off joystick controls to dribble, pass, shoot, head or chip the ball and do sliding tackles.**
* **Set piece. FREE KICKS including dummies and the ability to dip the ball or bend the ball round a defensive wall.**
* **9 types of corner kicks with full control of shot power. Long and short throw ins.**
* **Team selection from a squad of 16 with substitution and a choice of tactics.**
* **League and cup competitions with Extra Time, Injury Time and sudden death penalty shoot outs.**
* **Facility to view, edit and save the Action Replays and create a Golden Shots disc.(Excl. IBM & CBM 64)**
* **Facility to load Player Manager teams and tactics for a single or league game.**
* **Red and yellow cards, 16 different referees, injury time and a host of features to create an atmosphere for a game which is real fun to play.**

ST ACTION - The best game ever to grace the ST. Highest accolade I can give.
AMIGA USER INT - The best computer game ever **97%**
THE ONE - Ultimate soccer simulation. **96%**
THE ACE - Brilliant. Buy, Buy, Buy. **930.**
AMIGA FORMAT - Best footy game to have appeared on any machine. **94%**
ST FORMAT - What a game! Gem to play. Magic. **90%**
C & VG - Championship winning material. **95%**
GAMES MACHINE - Probably the best sports game ever. **92%**
COMMODORE USER - No other footie game can touch it. **90%**
AMIGA ACTION - Surpasses all other football games. **93%**
POPULAR COMPUTING WEEKLY - Nothing short of brilliant.
NEW COMPUTER EXPRESS - Computer football event of the year.

AMIGA & ST £19.99 EXP. AMIGA £24.99
IBM (AT & XT Turbo, EGA & VGA) £24.99
CBM 64 - SPECTRUM - AMSTRAD £9.99, £14.99

An International class player takes charge of a third division club as Player Manager. His brief is simple **-Bring Back The Glory Days.**

His success depends on his playing skills on the pitch and managerial skills in devising winning tactics, aquiring the right players from the transfer market and building a team worthy of the highest honours.

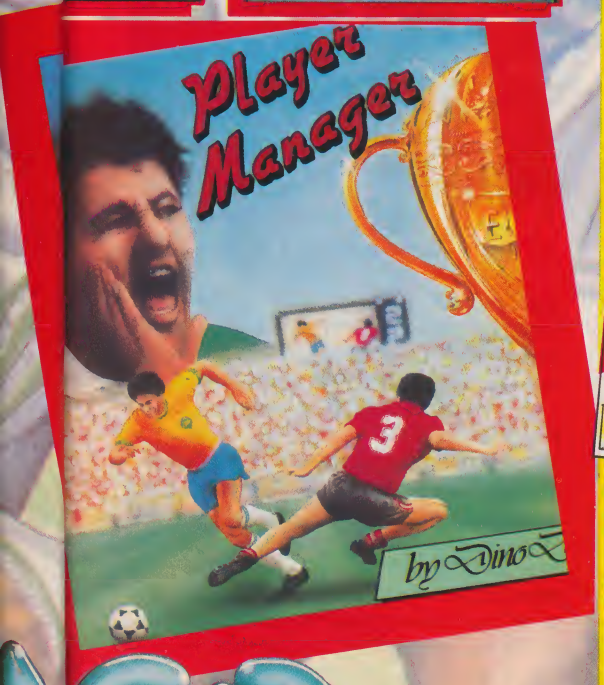
* **Unique facility to design and implement your own tactics.**
* **Over 1000 individual players, each with a unique combination of attributes and skills.**
* **A lively transfer market. Haggle for the best deal.**
* **4 division league and a cup tournament with sudden death penalty shoot out.**

The Player Manager brings the every day realities of a manager's life, his talents as a manager and a player, his triumphs and his failures into a sharp FOCUS.

ST. ACTION - A stroke of pure genius.
THE ONE - An exceptional football management simulation, Astounding depth. Most involved, rewarding and playable.
THE ACE - Successfully blends challenging soccer management with frantic end to end arcade action. **920**
NEW COMPUTER EXPRESS - The sheer depth is incredible. A definitive management game.
COMMODORE USER - At last a management game that requires true management skills - a winner. **94%**
ST FORMAT - Brilliant. **93%**
AMIGA FORMAT - Enthralling and addictive. **93%**
ZZAP - Best football management game ever written. **92%**

AMIGA - ST £19.99

IENSION IN
SIMULATIONS



THE FINAL WHISTLE
Amiga - ST £12.99 (Rel. Nov.)

Raises the skills required and gameplay of KICK OFF 2 to new heights.

Two extra kits.
Look at any player stats. (attributes and skill) before selecting squad.
Totally new corner kicks with full control of the power, height and trajectory of the ball.
Enhanced throw ins and penalty shots.
Provision to flick the ball in the air and do a blinding header or a spectacular overhead kick.
New two players team mode. Player 1 in position or nearest to the ball and player 2 in position or keeper.
Linesmen and referee on the pitch.
A new player attribute FLAIR. A player with a high level of flair will try a solo attempt at the goal.
4 new pitches - Wembley - Icy - Muddy - Non-League

And Lot's More

WINNING TACTICS (£6.99 - Rel. Nov.) - A collection of tactics for use in Player Manager or KO2 with full explanations.
RETURN TO EUROPE (£9.99 - Rel. Dec.) - Three European cup competitions. UEFA cup - European Cup - Cup Winners Cup.
GIANTS OF EUROPE (Rel. 1991) Best teams of Europe on one disc.

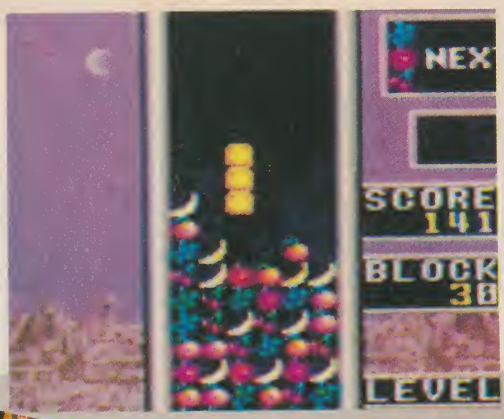
Draft specifications. Subject to changes without notice

ANCO SOFTWARE, UNIT 10, BURNHAM TRADING ESTATE, LAWSON ROAD, DARTFORD, KENT.
TELEPHONE No: 0322 92513/18 FAX No: 0322 93422

ANCO

It's that girl again! Mel Costin models the latest accessory for the hi-tech, mobile gamesplayer who wants it all in colour.

COLUMNS, a colourful update on the Tetris style of arcade puzzle games.



The Sega Game Gear colour handheld console... 4096 colours, four-channels of sound, optional TV tuner and it only costs £79 (in Japan)!

PALM

Japanese console companies are putting a lot of faith into the 'Walkman' theory of portable electronic entertainment. If you visit your local electro-gadgeteer in downtown Tokyo you can buy a Nintendo Gameboy, Atari Lynx, NEC PC Engine GT (Turbo-Express), and now a Sega Game Gear... the latest addition to the team of handheld consoles. So how does it compare to the portable competition?

The Sega Game Gear is a sleek black console with the now classic handheld top-design of screen, joypad, two fire buttons and a start key. Its size and weight is pitched between the Gameboy and the Lynx. Game Gear weighs a reasonable 570g and is a little larger than a VHS video-cassette. It has a similar internal architecture to the Sega's 8-bit Master System deck, but cannot use any Master game cartridges.

Six AA-size batteries provide you with a 3.2" backlit colour LCD screen at a resolution of 480x146 with 16 on-screen colours out of a palette of 4096. A loud internal speaker blasts out three PSG stereo-sound channels (plus a noise generator) . If you don't want to annoy your fellow communters you can connect 'Walkman' headphones. You plug your game cartridges into a slot in the top-back of the console.

Game Gear has a wealth of optional accessories including a TV tuner, link-up lead to let two Game Gear owners to play head-to-head games, and various power supply options such as 9V DC mains-adaptor and a cable which allows you to power the Game Gear using a car cigarette-lighter.

But the most impressive feature of the new Sega machine is its very low price. You can pick-up a Game Gear in Japan for only 19800 yen (£79). This compares to the official UK prices of £69.99 for the monochrome Gameboy, with the Lynx coming in at a hefty £179.99. And let's not forget the 'Rolls-Royce' of handhelds, the PC Engine GT costing the equivalent of £250 in Japan! Already the Game Gear has a clear advantage, but what about the software?

PLAY THE GAMES

There are three games available for the Game Gear at present. Prices are in the region of 3500 yen (£14) per games cart. *Pengo* is a conversion of the ancient Sega coin-op, while *Columns* is a more up-to-date coin-op adaption taking advantage of the current craze for arcade puzzle games (fast becoming the defacto standard for handheld games). In fact, you can think of *Columns* as a colourful version of *Tetris*.

Super Monaco GP is the most impressive title of the three. This fast *Pole-Position* style racing-sim is full of extra features like a multitude of

GAME GEAR SPECS

SCREEN: 3.2" backlit LCD
RESOLUTION: 480x146
COLOURS: 16 colours on-screen out of a palette of 4096
SOUND: 3 stereo-sound channels (PSG) and noise.
SIZE: 103x210x38mm
WEIGHT: 570g
PORTS: Walkman headphone socket, 9V DC power socket, external 'expansion' socket
CONTROLS: eight-directional joypad, two fire buttons, volume/brightness controllers
POWER: six AA batteries (or 9V DC mains-supply)
PRICE: 19800 yen (£79)
GAMES OUT NOW: Super Monaco GP, Columns, Pengo
GAMES OUT SOON: Wonderboy, G-Loc, Pro-Baseball '90, Dragon Crystal
AVERAGE GAME PRICE: 3500 yen (£14)
OPTIONAL EXTRAs: TV tuner, link-up cable so two Game Gear owners can play head-to-head games, output lead with two stereo 'phono' sockets, mains power supply, car cigarette-lighter power lead.

One of the attractive 'splash' screens from WONDERBOY. The Game Gear is very similar to the Sega Master System... only it's fully portable (he, he).

SUPER MONACO GP: probably the best game available on the Game Gear at the moment.

It will interesting to see how G-LOC converts over to the Game Gear... it's not looking that hot from this screen-shot.

PENGO hits the Game Gear.

ACE EXCLUSIVE

Sega has just launched a colour handheld console in Japan costing a mere £79! Is the end in sight for the Lynx and Gameboy? Rik Haynes grabs the first look at the GAME GEAR...

POWER

Grand Prix circuits to race-in and the chance to customise your racing car with different wings, engines and tires.

That's not all. *Wonderboy*, *Pro-Baseball '90*, *Dragon Crystal* and even *G-Loc* will be released on the Game Gear in the coming months.

GETTING INTO GEAR

The future looks very bright for the Game Gear. Software supply should not be a problem. Sega is one of the top Japanese games companies with a string of classic coin-ops already under its belt. We could soon be playing Game Gear versions of *Space Harrier*, *Out Run*, *Afterburner*, *Thunderblade*, *Powderdrift* and *Galaxy Force II*.

And don't forget all the Japanese, American and European third-party software houses that Sega has signed up to produce games on the Master and Megadrive. So will they be developing Game Gear titles as well?

Geoff Brown, boss of US Gold, was most enthusiastic about the new Sega baby. It seems likely that the Master versions of *Paperboy*, *Gauntlet*, *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade - the Arcade Game*, and *Impossible Mission* will be converted over to the Game Gear. "We also have the opportunity to develop other titles in the future," added Brown. Meanwhile, Gary Bracey at Ocean told us they have no plans to develop Game Gear titles at present. Though he did manage to mention the fact that *Robocop* is nearly finished on the Gameboy and looking very good.

Mirrorsoft's boss Peter Bilotta was very secretive about the whole subject of Sega's Game Gear, repeatedly saying he was bound by a non-disclosure agreement. Does this mean we'll shortly be playing Game Gear versions of *Xenon II*, *Back to the Future Part II* and *Speedball*?

I'D BUY THAT FOR A DOLLAR

Nick Alexander, boss of Virgin/Mastertronic – the official UK distributor of the Sega Master and Megadrive, was pretty non-committal on the official UK launch of the Sega Game Gear. "There's no firm release date but we're hoping for early next year," confirmed Alexander. And what about the price? "We'd love it to be under £100 – we just don't know at the moment."

In the meantime, you can bet the grey-importers will be buying up huge stocks of what must be the best value handheld console in the world.

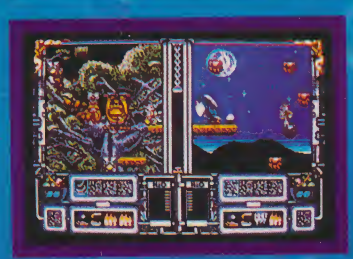
Soon you'll be able to play WONDERBOY on the Game Gear.

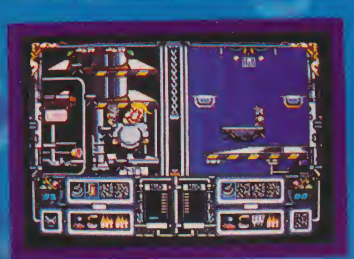
Special thanks to ACTIVE CONSOLES on 081 752 0260 for supplying the Sega Game Gear and games.

Flip-it & Magnose

EXCITEMENT ON TAP!

In **FLIP-IT & MAGNOSE**, two players can compete head-to-head on their mission across six action packed levels thanks to an innovative split-screen display. The question is – **WHO WILL RETURN AS CHAMPION OF MARS?**





Screen shots: ATARI ST version

TWO CAN PLAY AT THIS GAME! THE PLANET MARS IS RUNNING OUT OF WATER – AND ONLY YOU CAN SAVE IT . . . In a last ditch attempt to save the drought-stricken Red Planet, its two top agents, FLIP-IT & MAGNOSE, have been sent to Earth to collect enough water to save their planet. Sounds simple? Don't you believe it!

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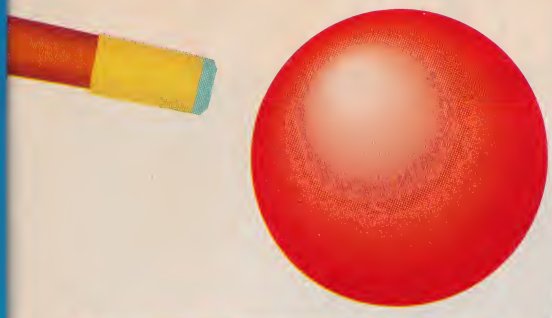


ALL CUED UP

At 25 frames per second, Archer Maclean's new Snooker-sim is even faster than Jimmy White on fast forward.

Archer Maclean, the veteran programmer of the classic games Dropzone and IK+, has now turned his attention to the 'mundane' sport of Snooker... and produced one of the most stunning micro simulations the ACE team has ever played.

The lively programmer is putting the finishing touches to his yet unnamed Snooker game, which should be released within the next few months on 16-bit format by Virgin/Mastertronic.

Archer's new masterpiece incorporates some of the fastest 3D filled polygon graphics yet seen on an ST, with a very respectable screen rate of 25 frames per second. It also includes a multitude of play options, viewpoints and a handy 'undo' feature allowing you try out and perfect some nifty trick shots. Look out for a full review in a near future issue of ACE.

And for those of you reading in black and white... get your eyes fixed!

PLAY IT AGAIN, SID

Now you can relive the classic C64 music hits on your Amiga courtesy of a remarkable piece of public domain software.

Tears will stream from your eyes as you boot Your 100 Best Tunes from the Commodore 64 and listen to the sound effects and music tracks from such classics as Commando, Crazy Comets, Delta, Ghosts 'n' Goblins, Hypaball, International Karate, The Last Ninja, Master of Magic, Mutants, Parallax, Sanxion, Terra Cresta, Thing on a Spring, Trap and Warhawk – to name but the best.

Per Hakan and Ron Birk have managed to simulate the infamous SID – the C64's custom sound chip – on the Amiga. And they claim to have achieved this amazing feat in a mere six weeks. There's only one thing missing from the list, there's no sign of Wizball! This is an outrageous omission – Martin Galway's work on Wizball was undoubtedly the best audio heard on any C64 game.

Many thanks to LM Software of 1 Queens Road, Southend-on-Sea, Essex for supplying this essential £2.99 Amiga program. What are your favourite game tunes and sound effects? Why? Send your top ten tracks to ACE Letters, EMAP Images, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

DIAL 0898 555563 NOW!

ACE on the line

The ACE Interactive Newsline is the only way to get a weekly update on the latest games gossip, future games technology and games currently under development. You can also win special prizes. The ACE Newsline is updated every Wednesday afternoon. Calls cost 44p per minute (standard), 33p per minute (off-peak). You're just a phone-call away from the future...

IT'S A SMALL WORLD

Honey, I Shrunk the Kids Movie Set Adventure is the latest attraction to the Disney-MGM Studios Theme Park in Florida, USA.

"This takes studios theme park guests into the lilliputian land of the 1989 Disney hit motion picture Honey, I Shrunk the Kids," says Disney, "Towering blades of grass reaching 30 feet in height, gargantuan backyard beasties and gigantic sprinkler heads all dwarf human-sized visitors."

All three Florida-based Walt Disney World theme parks are open daily throughout the year, with extended hours of operation during the summer and at other peak vacation times. General guest information about the Walt Disney resort is available by writing to: Guest Letters Department, PO Box 10040, Lake Buena Vista, Florida 32830-0040, USA – or by calling 0101 407 8244321.

Disney trivia: there are more than 11000 overnight accommodations throughout the Disney vacation kingdom.

Say hello to the Turtles and get shrunk to the size of a flea in Walt Disney World!

HE'S BACK... TO PROTECT THE INNOCENT

ROBOCOP 2

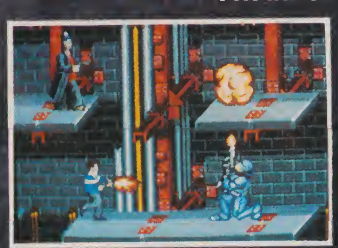
EVEN IN THE FUTURE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT, THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT.

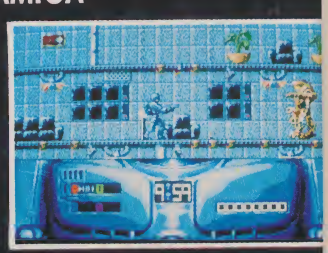
The future is a rough place, Detroit is a bankrupt city... torn apart by the decadent forces of the Old Man and his corrupt corporation. If you want to die - then walk the streets, if you want to live - then pray for the return of **Robocop!**

Robocop 2 has justice in mind... a kind of justice only he can deliver! Take on Detroit's evil mastermind and his mega-corporation in some of the most action-packed scenes ever devised for maximum entertainment value.

Detroit is falling apart - it's time to put it all back together!

SPECTRUM AMSTRAD COMMODORE
ATARI ST CBM AMIGA





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ocean

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Letters

Console aggro, computer aggro, adventure aggro, and a debate on economics....

DON'T BELIEVE THE HYPE!

First of all, I would like to say how much I think your mag has gone downhill, heading more towards consoles and endless speculation on CD technology. Why dedicate so much time to consoles? Don't you think that the market will soon (if it hasn't already) become overcrowded and people will not have a clue as to what to buy? I don't believe that all these computer, consoles and handhelds can possibly all live together. Consoles in particular seem to be aimed at the very people (the younger generation) who cannot afford to lay out £170 or so on a console, and then anything from £30-£50 for the software.

My guess is that in the next few months you will have forgotten about the Megadrive (for instance) and will be raving on about CD hardware (such as the Amiga), shortly followed by the latest hi-tech gadget you think we should buy. Perhaps you should realise that most of your readers do not have an endless supply of cash and a desire to change their machines every six months. You may as well rename your mag Advanced Console Entertainment! This may seem harsh criticism, but while I welcome technological advancement I do not welcome unending hype. By all means report such things - but in moderation!

John Glover, Middlesex

Harsh words indeed Mr. Glover, and (in our opinion) quite unfounded. Taking your first point, we would disagree that too much space is being devoted to console and CD news. You yourself state that they are new technology and as you know, ACE is dedicated to bringing its audience news of such.

As for the price of consoles, we are inclined to agree, although the cost of hard/software is only relative to the U.K market. Japanese consumers pay around £130 for the Megadrive itself and £24 for cartridges. Granted, that may not be applicable to the U.K, but even here £170 for a 16-bit machine with arcade capabilities and £35 per title is considerably cheaper than any other such machine. As regards handhelds, (retailing at around the £70-£80 mark), they provide a cheaper alternative and all the playability a younger gameplayer could wish for.

As for forgetting current technology when the future comes around, take a look in ACE and you will find that we still cover the 8-bit machines that could long ago have been disregarded. Covering new technology does not necessarily mean that we are attempting to force readers into purchasing - just to advise and inform those who wish to know. Let's face it - who wants to live in the past?

THE WUMPUS IS DEAD...

I would like to offer a few thoughts on the subject of text adventures, as it seems that they are a dying breed.

A form of game similar to a book that actually lets the player take part in the story ought to have a lot going for it, yet the popularity of books and novels has always far outweighed that of adventures. The reason must be that the implementation of such games is all wrong.

For a start, text ought to be dynamic and captivate the readers attention. I am a great fan of just a few locations being initially accessible and progress being made via logical puzzle-solving, giving the player a sense of achievement and allowing the story to develop along a set course. There is nothing worse than being faced with dozens of locations and an inventory full of useless objects, right at the outset. It is very daunting and dilutes the plot. Progression is the keyword, and text-based games on today's machines could involve quite a journey. Puzzles should always be logical and never include the kind of ludicrous random element you see in today's adventures. About 90% of all adventures I have played, I've been stuck within about half an hour, no wonder nobody buys them anymore. I only hope that I haven't written a eulogy, but software houses should realise that text-based titles now have even greater potential.

Mr C.A Horsley, Birmingham

Your letter evoked a fit of nostalgia in our Editor, who got onto the 'phone to someone called The White Wizard and asked his opinion. It arrived the following day by gnome-drawn buggy...

Honourable Wizardling Horsley, Greetings!

Although in retirement near the North Pole I was interested in the points in your letter and felt a reply was in order. Like you, I believe that the adventure format is far from dead, but simply suffering a temporary set back. The attractions of verbal puzzling and the power of the written word will certainly make a comeback.

But how? My feeling is that CD technology will make a huge contribution to adventuring. Remember that CD's can store the spoken word very efficiently. The big problem with traditional adventures was reading all that text on-screen. Now you'll be able to enter into adventures in an aural fashion, with the games presenting themselves much like interactive radio dramas with video screen graphics and powerful stereo sound effects.

This will happen because (a) the spoken word is cheaper than moving pictures and (b) good actors can work miracles with the right text. Stand by for the return of the Wizard! And the Pilgrim! Uncle Tom Cobbley! Anita Sinclair! Pete *(Contd p999)*

CONFUSION FUSION

Could you please tell me why when reviewing Megadrive games, prices in ACE are quoted as being £59.99? When readers see this I'm sure it must put them off buying the Megadrive. You only have to look at numerous ads to see that most suppliers charge around £30-£35. Perhaps that is why games get such low ratings. For £60 you would expect something outstanding. As it is, Megadrive games are outstanding anyway...

Graeme Silburn, Essex

The Megadrive titles we reviewed were received at a very advanced stage (although admittedly not reviewed for some time) – hence the £60 price tag. We are aware of mail-order firms offering cheaper prices and will be taking note in future. NB ACE reviews always concentrate on the gameplay – value for money is not included in ratings. We believe that only you know best how much you're prepared to pay for a game.

THE SONG REMAINS THE SAME

In your console special (Issue 36), you exhort all 16-bit computer owners who are "serious about games" to "seriously consider buying a console", implying that the way forward for Advanced Computer Entertainment lies with dedicated games machines such as the Megadrive. Do you seriously think that I and other Amiga (or PC/ST) owners are about to abandon the versatility and capabilities of our computers, for the limitations imposed on console owners by their machines?

Certainly those who can afford it should certainly consider a Megadrive *as well* as their computer, but I'd be willing to bet that after the flashy customised graphics and multi-channel sound of the 'new toy' had worn off, it will be the computer, not the console that will continue to demand the most time. Where else but on 16-bit computers can you continue to tax the brain with strategy games like Midwinter and Ultima VI, and fulfill your dreams of flight with sim's such as Interceptor.

A glance at the current batch of console titles should confirm the limitations of these machines - games like Flying Shark, Thunderforce III and Ghostbusters on the Megadrive, and Ghosts 'n' Goblins on the nintendo are like junk-food for themind. Plenty of arcade action but little to hold the prolonged interest of the brain. I would suggest that such machines are only suitable for children, after which (hopefully) they graduate to slightly more advanced forms of computer entertainment.

Additionally, the enthusiasm which ACE and other mags have for the new beasts would seem to be premature - of the nine consoles featured in 'Hotboxes', four are not yet available in the U.K and Eire, three are very dated and definitely a step down from the likes of the one meg Amiga and many PC's. And that leaves? The Neo-Geo, truly an advanced machine but one which, (as ACE rightly pointed out) is beyond the reach of the everyday user (at £400 anyway). I also have my doubts about software support for many of these machines - EA seemed enthusiastic but I wonder if their style of advanced simulation is really suited to consoles.

Don't be swayed to easily by new technology *just* because it's new. In my view, the new way forward is with the likes of already established machines like the Amiga, ST and Mac - who would have dreamt ten years ago that the likes of Cosmic Osmo would be stretching the latter to such limits.

E. Daly, Co. Dublin

Why is everyone fuming these days? The arguments currently being put forward hail back to those put forward by ST and Amiga owners, and Spectrum and C64 owners before that. The 'my machine is better than yours' debate is all rather petty when you consider that anyone not wanting to involve themselves with a certain format may excercise their right of consumption and simply not 'consume'!

To say that consoles are very limited as regards game styles shows a cynicism and lack of understanding. To begin with, Populous has already been converted to the Megadrive as have golfing titles, and the Nintendo (the World's most successful system to date) sports a range of Ultima products. For the future, plans to convert titles such as F29 Retaliator to console format further demonstrate the capabilities of dedicated machines - how's that for versatility? Certainly there are numerous straight conversions available for consoles which may require little thought to play, but that is so for all machines.

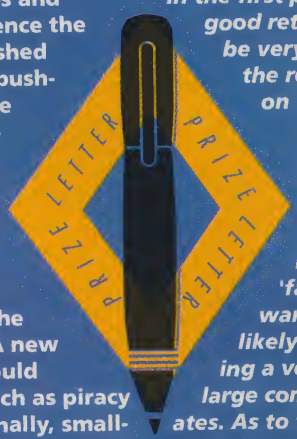
Next, the machines mentioned in 'Hotboxes' are all planned for release in the UK with exception of the NEC Handheld – and are all available through specialist dealers even if not yet officially launched. If you can buy it, we're going to cover it.

Yes, the Neo Geo is expensive, but you can rent it and in any event we always let our readers draw their own conclusions about price. We give you the facts – you decide whether you should splash out on it or not.

STOCKS AND SHAREWARE

'Inspired' by the withdrawal of the U.K arm of Activision, I'm writing you what could be a remedy for both software houses and games-players. Why don't software houses convert at least part of their capital into shares to be offered on the stockmarket? In this way, games-players could support their favourite software houses and (more importantly) influence the kind and quality of published software - perhaps even pushing prices down. Software houses needn't worry so much about piracy and big losses because shareholders would see the whole situation from a company viewpoint, so buying more games (especially from the 'houses they invest in). A new kind of responsibility would develop and activities such as piracy would decrease. Additionally, smaller software houses would gain more strength and be able to compete in the market better.

In short, the two sides of the market would come closer together, resulting in better relationships and conditions for both. I'm no Economics specialist, but I think this would be very possible, couldn't it?
Anne Maczweski, Germany



Although a nice ideal, the answer to your final question is no - it wouldn't work.

For a start, in all probability, only the larger software houses would have the resources to float shares. Any smaller house wishing to do so, would have to guarantee a good return on shares to attract investors in the first place, and to ensure a good return, they would have to be very sure of sales to create the revenue needed to invest on further product (Whew!)

In addition, consumers would inevitably invest in those houses which they considered to be worth the most, rather than a 'favourite'. Smaller software houses would be more likely to be swamped, creating a very limited market of large companies or conglomerates. As to the concepts of less piracy and more spending, both would be unlikely to occur as firstly, there are always people who will prefer 'free' software and secondly, consumer's investing would have less, rather than more disposable income, thus buying less software!

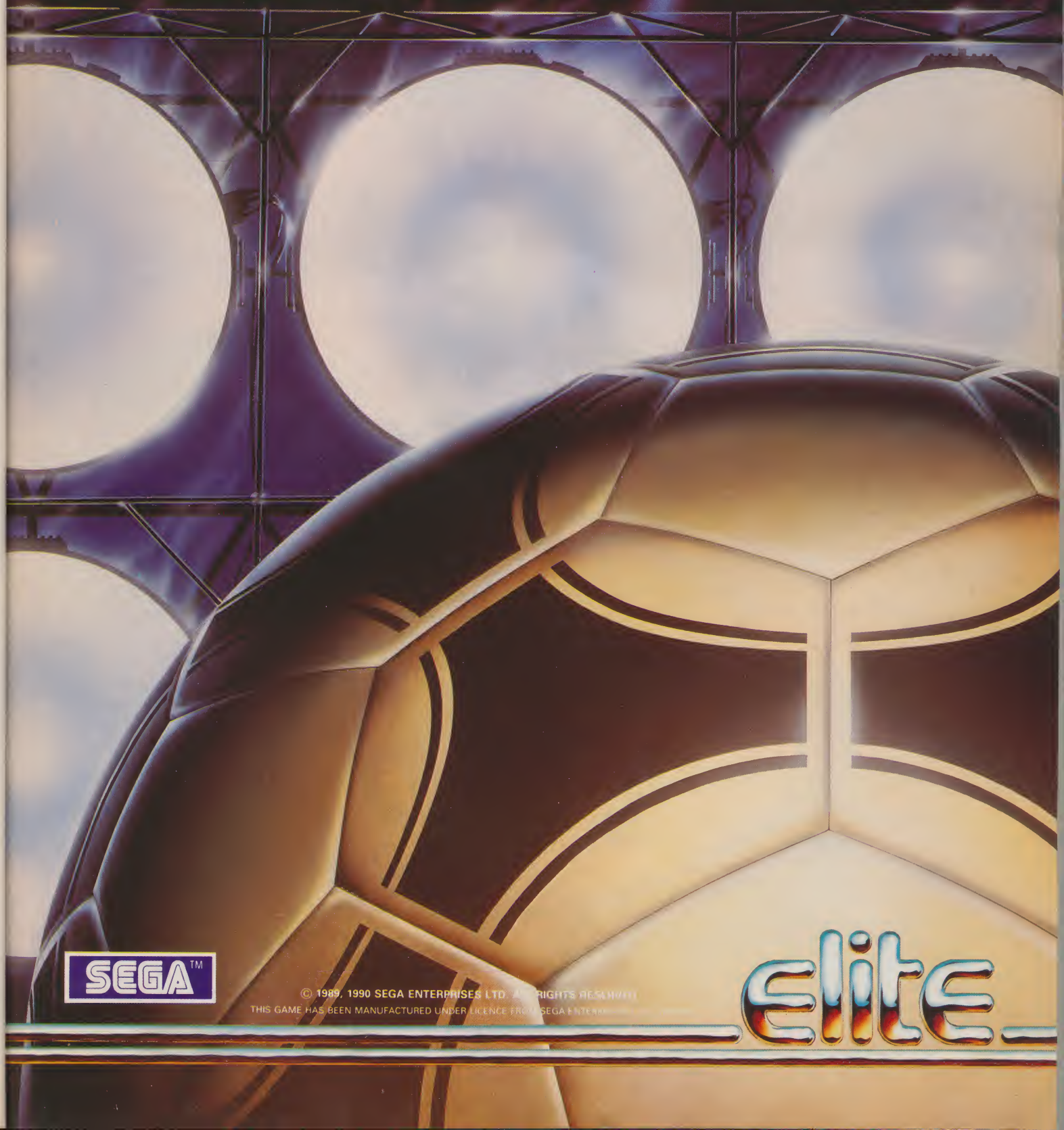
A nice idea, but sadly unlikely – although flotation is more frequent in the larger American market.

WHY NO BINDERS?

I now have a year's supply of ACE but still no binder to put them in. When, oh WHEN are we going to get the binders you've been promising for so long?
A. Baker, Liverpool

We do apologise about the long delay on binders. However, readers will be relieved to hear that a deal has been struck with a supplier and they should be available by mid November at the latest.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP™ SOCCER



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elite

RAINBIRD

BETRAYAL

A WEB OF INTRICATE POSSIBILITIES - BUT FAIR PLAY ISN'T ONE OF THEM

MASTERS OF STRATEGY

A WEB OF INTRICATE POSSIBILITIES - BUT FAIR PLAY ISN'T ONE OF THEM

BETRAYAL

The West Marches is a corrupt land ruled by immoral leaders. You are one of four Knights with a lust for power. And in the pursuit of power, the end justifies the means.

The bloodiest battles yield the greatest spoils. Strategically extend your domain, reduce your rivals' resources, and tighten your stranglehold on the peasants of the land.

The towns provide your power base. Manage them successfully, and harvest the wealth needed to buy, bribe and fight for ultimate power.

Betrayal involves a long, hard, ruthless struggle, starting with the economic management of your towns and cultivation of your lands, culminating in the honing of your military strategy and execution of political subterfuge.

Develop a mastery of political subterfuge, gaining places for your Courtiers at the palaces of the King and Bishop, ready for the coup which will make you the master of Betrayal.

BETRAYAL
A HELL OF A GOD GAME

A new barrel of fine Welsh ale had just been broached. The royal palace's smoky dining hall resounded to cheery voices. To one side of the top table a harpist and a minstrel were struggling to be heard above the commotion caused by two dogs snarling over a bone in a corner.

Eating slowly, I leant forward to catch the breathless whisper of a rival knight.

"They came in at a run, baying like wolves. Four wild-eyed barbarians ready to cut, gouge, pulverise and kill anything that moved."

That news was indeed music to my ears. My forces' attack on his wealthiest town had met with success. Financially weakened, militarily broken, and politically bankrupt, he could no longer hold influence at Court.

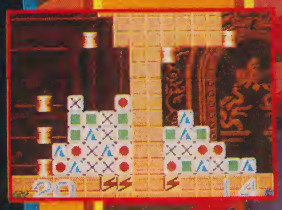
So long as no evidence of my wrong doing remained. So long as the Gods blessed the crops of my harvest. So long as the rumours of the capture of my brother were true. The throne was mine.

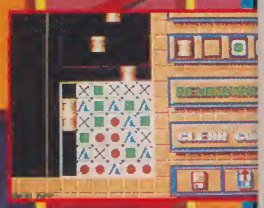
I've cheated, lied, spied and slaughtered. The fruits of Betrayal are mine.

RAINBIRD

PLOT YOUR OPPONENTS DOWNFALL AND...STRIKE

PLOTTING





"...plays brilliantly. An absolute must for puzzle fans". Sinclair User

"...it's simple, but it's dead hard... more exciting than many other puzzle games - tricky, but also very addictive." Crash

"...fun to play and will keep you addicted for hours on end. A good game that is sure to please." Amiga Action

ADDICTION!

Addiction!...that's the name of the game. The concept is simple ...destroying blocks! But once you've got control of those bricks will you ever let go?

It all seems so easy, but can you beat the micro or your partner, at this hideously mind boggling game.
Special blocks will give you extra lives... GREAT!... but believe me, you'll need to take every advantage of this software's hardware! You'll need the skill of a Rubi-Cube master and the reflexes of a pigeon at a skeet shoot! Plot your move, take aim and block 'em out!... It's that simple... as simple as grilling ice cubes!

TAITO

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Welcome to...

The year is 1999. The location is Southern England. The venue is Gamesworld, an entertainment complex that may seem out of this world, but in reality uses readily available technology. In fact, it could just as easily have been built back in 1990, but no-one had the idea. A pity, because it's proved to be one of the most successful entertainment innovations since the Bingo Hall.

Construction of Gamesworld began in 1997, financed by a rights issue taken out by Maelstrom Gigagames Euro Inc. The original concept was developed by the ACE Think Tank (Tokyo branch) and the project took eighteen months to complete at a cost of ECU420M. The site covers four acres of prime land in downtown Welwyn Garden, just round the corner from the Tesco Ministry.

DREAMWORLD

Gamesworld was envisaged as a haven for committed gamesters who wanted more than just another round of *Robocop 6*. Right from the start, it was decided that the complex should offer dedicated entertainment scenarios for ALL players – not just for Gamepunks and Cyberwillies. Strategy, combat, simulation, brainpower...even romance – we wanted to ensure that everyone had a gameworld they could feel at home in.

Unfortunately, it was a condition of the finance house that an 'adult entertainment' section be included (the 'Porniverse') but this was against the wishes of the Think Tank and (judging by the demonstrations) the public. This unacceptable face of cybergaming is liable to be the subject of government legislation later this year.

So what has Gamesworld got to offer you? Is it really worth taking a trip on the Turbe and forking out ECU20 an hour for? Judge for yourself...

WORLDS WITHIN WORLDS

Gamesworld consists of eight scenario centres, each dedicated to a particular game discipline (see the various panels in this article), and connected to the Main Lobby. Each centre runs different scenarios each week and comprises a main cockpit area (where the individual players sit and participate), an Actiondome (a scanned area usually used for live encounters), and Robos – robotic figures who commentate or otherwise take part in the scenario.

When you arrive at Gamesworld, you'll need to place a deposit of ECU20 in the IDC machine at the main entrance. This unit will lasergraph your facial appearance and etch it onto your Smart ID, which you take from the slot at the bottom of the machine. If it doesn't appear, try kicking it.

Your Smart ID is a small smart card with transceiver and CPU, originally developed in Japan in 1989 and exhibited at the ACE Living Room of the Future show in 1990. Credit card sized, it holds 250K of memory and can receive/transmit at a range of up to 30 metres. It's used to store your Gamesworld credits (see below) as well as your game status (for all scenarios), personal information, medical details and Community Charge ID (included by law). The lasergraph picture enables us to make a visual identification when necessary – remember, the card is NOT transferable. Your Smart ID card remains the property of Gamesworld and you may surrender it at any time for a 50% refund of your deposit.

This shot is taken from a cyberspace EVA interlude in the Warworld *Eurocraters* scenario (see other screenshot). The player is making his way along Farringdon Road towards the old Guardian offices, now the headquarters of the European Commissariat Propaganda Division.

This feature is based on an article in ACE Issue 150. We have, by special arrangement with our publisher, transmitted it down a temporal fax for your attention. This, people of 1990, is the future of games. And it's not just a dream, as you're about to find out...

You should now enter the Main Lobby. Your card will be scanned automatically on entry and inscribed with the current Gamesworld status and options, preparatory to your joining any of the scenarios.

The Lobby, like the Actiondomes (see caption to main illustration) within each scenario centre, is scanned permanently by a Hyper-IMME system based on the engine developed in 1990 by Subjective Technologies in California (and demonstrated in prototype form at the 1990 CES). Infra red sensors combine with laser tracking devices to monitor your movements throughout the complex, recording any encounters onto your Smart ID.

Eurocraters: **Europe is in the grip of a long and bitter civil war. This screenshot shows a scene from the Battle of London 2040, in which 200 live players and 850 homeplayers participated over a 48 hour period. The player is on a strafing run of Tower Bridge with two Eurocrat Hondas in pursuit**

Cyberwillies come in all shapes, sizes, and sexes. They share one obsession: cyberspace encounters – and not always amorous ones, either

This smoothie from Romanceworld is actually a Gamespunk in disguise (Gamespunks are the Gamesworld equivalent of hackers, buying and selling dodgy Smart IDs)

A regular visitor to the Porniverse. This is the sort of gamester that we can do without, thank you

BUYING TIME

Gamesworld is divided into eight scenario centres. Participation costs ECU20 an hour and is deducted from your Smart ID store as soon as you enter the specific scenario centre.

Credits are purchasable in the Main Lobby 24 hours a day. Ensure therefore that once you're past the Centre Roboguard you get to your assigned cockpit as quickly as possible. All scenarios play 24 hours a day. Please ensure that you leave your cockpit after the session as you would wish to find it. Bedding is not allowed.

Please remember: Gamesworld cannot take responsibility for death or disfigurement unless directly attributable to negligence on the part of its employees. A Medibutton is provided in each cockpit and is tested daily. Use it to summon help if you experience chest pain, breathing difficulty, or acute adrenalin poisoning.

Information about the current scenarios available in each centre is displayed on the Wallmenu at all times, together with booking information that tells you how many spaces are still available for players. Remember that in addition to the cockpit players, there are limited places for home players – see elsewhere in this article. Choose with confidence, enter, and enjoy....

You don't have to attend Gamesworld in person to get involved. Purchase or rent a Gameslink and you can play a part in all the scenarios except Fantasyworld. Home players take different roles in scenarios from live players, often interacting with the players at Gamesworld and even making money out of them.

BEHIND THE SCENES...

Here at Maelstrom head offices, beside the clear, sparkling waters and golden beaches of the Mersey estuary, we evolve the complex scenarios that inject life into the Gamesworlds.

A coordinator heads each development team and allocates tasks for the think-tank, the software workshop, and the art studio. The think-tanks are tailor-made for each project to provide a broad spectrum of ideas – a Warworld think-tank usually includes a historian, two or three novelists, a games designer, a physicist, and one ordinary Gamesworld player, chosen at random. In the software workshop, we use 3D modelling hooked up to 5th generation language program generators to develop the code that runs the game. Our art studio is, perhaps, the strangest. Most of our artists are sculptors and all of them do their work directly in a cyberspace environment. Come into our studios and all you will see is a group of people wearing goggles and waving datagloves about!

NINJAWORLD

Ninjaworld offers players the opportunity to develop alter egos of awesome power and throw them into combat against other players. The cockpits give full control over giant robotic machines which are configured by the player during practise combat sessions. Details of configurations are, of course, stored on your Smart ID. The Actiondome is fully scanned by a Hyper IMME system and is used by players to develop physical fighting manoeuvres that are then 'learnt' by the players' mechanical counterparts. For example, if you decide that the only way to defeat Mechnecho 4 is by using a particularly vicious throat kick, you can enter the required movements by carrying them out yourself (in slow motion) on the Actiondome floor, then editing the sequence in your cockpit before going into battle.

THE PORNIVERSE

The less said about this the better. It is currently closed due to technical difficulties following the unauthorised activity of a Cyberwillie who gained illicit access to Level 42. Although compelled by our backers to develop this centre, we are undismayed by impending legislation aimed at making this sort of thing illegal.

Robos are located beside the Actiondome in each centre. They are computer controlled figures who fulfil different roles in each scenario. Think of them as a 'chorus' – feeding opinions and information into the action and occasionally even participating in it.

Although of a similar basic design, cockpits can vary hugely in control configuration depending on the centre in which they appear and the scenario currently in progress. This cockpit has been extensively modified for High Moon – the most popular scenario ever to run at Fantasyworld, involving players in a dramatic shoot-out in a ghost town on the dark side of Luna.

FANTASYWORLD

This scenario centre gives you the chance to fulfil your wildest dreams. The cockpits have been especially designed for maximum flexibility and as a result, the mechanical interactivity of the scenarios is somewhat reduced. As compensation, however, Fantasyworld scenarios feature considerable cyberspace interludes and use the Actiondome as a Hyper IMME scanned area to monitor the interactions of numerous live players involved in role-playing encounters. The Robos adopt different identities at various points during the scenarios. Because of the emphasis on human interaction in this world, home players are able to log on as observers only.

Gamesworld is split into eight centres. Each centre can mount different scenarios and has hardware dedicated to different game disciplines.

POWERUP BOOTH

SPORTSWORLD

Sportsworld bears a similar relation to Ninjaworld as Crimeworld does to Strategyworld. The two centres are very similar, but the scenarios are very different. Sportsworld also uses the Actiondome to enable players to perfect actual physical manoeuvres. Scenarios cover all the main sports and some very exotic ones as well. The most popular is *Bloodball* – a totally unsubtle blend of *Kick Off 8* and *Karate Kid 6*.

STRATEGYWORLD

Some of us prefer to develop our offensives over a greater period of time than the hurly-burly of Warworld and Ninjaworld allows. *Strategyworld* scenarios have highly detailed cockpits with numerous control and monitoring facilities. As in Warworld, the Actiondome serves as a vast display area that alters configuration according to the scenario. Ringside Robos act as commentators and informants, occasionally (very occasionally!) breadcasting news of particular importance. Homeplayers can often play a larger part in Strategyworld scenarios than in any of the others.

The Main Lobby is entirely 'live', scanned continually by a powerful Hyper IMME system. If you're out of credits, you will almost certainly find yourself 'assisted' by a friendly credit sales executive. Gamepunks who are out to fight the system are often apprehended in this area if they are careless in programming their Smart IDs.

ROMANCEWORLD

Become a Barbara Cybercartland! Romanceworld cockpits are tastefully decorated in pink and fully equipped with Gossiphones, Image Enhancers, and Charismatrons. Our current scenario, *Royal Wedding*, challenges you to manipulate your social standing amongst your fellow players until you can worm your way into the bedroom of the Silicon Princess Mara (or, for female players, the Silicon Prince Marky). The Actiondome serves as a 'live encounter' location for hot blooded Romeos and Juliets! Scenario turns last five hours – listen to the wedding bells at the end of each cycle!

Note: to comply with Tesco Ministry legislation, certain sequences in Romanceworld may not be available to younger players. Latex bodysuits are mandatory for players wishing to play at Level 10.

Cockpits (see other illustrations) are in essence the same in each centre, but are designed to be configurable for different scenarios.

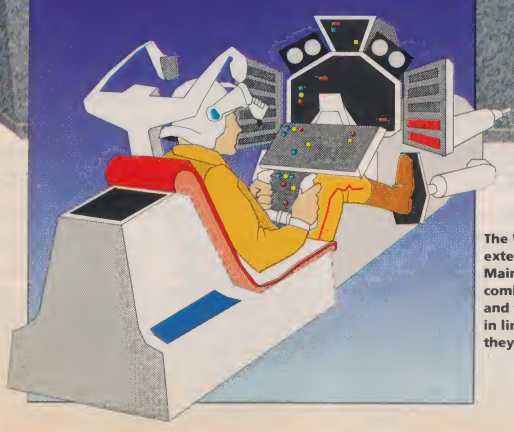
The Main Lobby also features the Comms Booth. This booth sells Gameslinks (see illustration) to home players. It also enables players to leave messages for each other and to communicate via satellite with other Gamesworld complexes throughout the world.

Each centre has an 'Actiondome' – an area set aside for physical interaction. The Actiondome in Warworld is smaller than the others as it serves only as a display device. In Crimeworld, Fantasyworld, and Romanceworld, however, it occupies half the centre and is used for live interaction. Interactive Actiondomes are scanned by Hyper IMME systems (see main text).

WARWORLD

Confront your fellow players in a fight to the finish. Warworld cockpits give you complete control of the fighting machines involved in the current scenario. The Actiondome in Warworld is given over to a large constantly updated battlemap, and the Robos act as news casters. Homeplayers may participate as 'spies', hacking into player's cockpit strategy systems and selling information to other players for game credits which may be used for live participation at Gamesworld.

WARWORLD COCKPIT



The Warworld cockpit is unusual in that it can be modified to some extent by the user himself. Players can purchase power-ups in the Main Lobby which literally plug into the fascia, giving additional combat potential. Cockpit hardware design was done by Neo-Konix and the control circuitry is by Flare International. Players participate in limited cyberspace sequences at various parts of the game, or when they want to indulge in EVA (extra vehicular activity).

CRIMEWORLD

Similar to Strategyworld, but the game turns are much shorter, usually lasting no more than a week (for international terrorist/fugitive scenarios) and often as little as six hours in more conventional, but more intense murder investigations. The scenarios here are always crime mysteries and pit the players against complex simulations of criminal and terrorist activity.

The Main Entrance to Gamesworld leads the punter by a Smart ID issue device. No-one get in without a card.

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CBM 64/128 DISK

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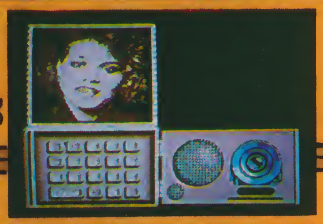

Mean Streets™
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Features:

- Interact with more than 27 digitised characters and respond to questions, bribes and threats.
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- Fly your 'Lotus speeder' to locations all along the West Coast.
- Rummage through offices, warehouses and factories looking for clues.

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PC & COMPATIBLES

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- Real Sound™ digitised sound – no hardware required.
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- Tremendous depth and playability.
- Breathtaking 256 colour VGA/MCGA graphics.

Screen shots are only intended to be illustrative of the game play and not the screen graphics which vary considerably between different formats in quality and appearance and are subject to the computer's specifications.

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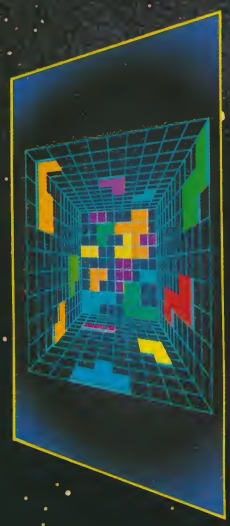
Software Incorporated

THE NEW AGE FOR SOFTWARE



COLLECTION CRYSTAL

INFOGRAMES

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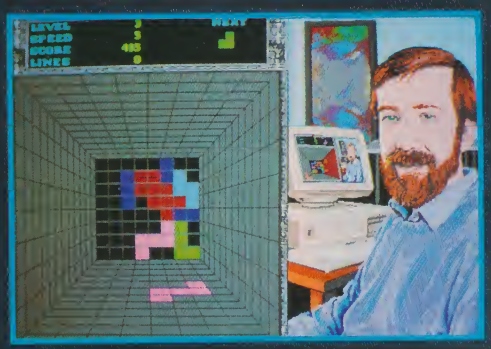
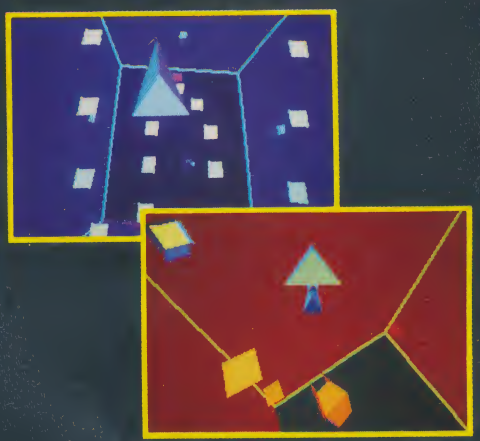


« Master the colours, rule space... »

ATARI ST-STE, AMIGA, PC & compatibles, Spectrum, C64, Macintosh

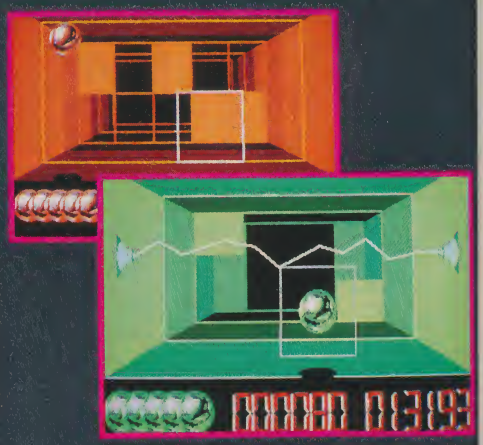
Alpha Waves



« They created the dream machine... »

ATARI ST-STE, AMIGA, PC & compatibles

The light corridor



« The echo of lights on the walls of silence... »

ATARI ST-STE, AMIGA, PC & compatibles

GAME BOY GIVEAWAY

Yay! Not just one, not just two, not just twenty...FIFTY Game Boys are up for grabs as ACE and Nintendo celebrate the console's UK launch

Picture the scene. It's Christmas Eve, and down the corridor your kid brother is waiting eagerly for the clippety-clop of cloven hooves and heavy breathing down the chimney. Could Santa possibly be bringing him a passport to endless portable gaming pleasure??

Who cares. Because YOU, you lucky dog, have already got your mitts on your very own Game Boy, thanks to that superlative ACE/Nintendo competition in issue 39. When howls of disappointment echo down the corridor (as Kiddo unwraps his pair of fluorescent nylon socks), the only sound that will come from your room is that of dancing Russians celebrating Level 9, handicap 5, in Gameboy *Tetris*. Ho, ho, ho...

IT COULDN'T BE EASIER

Yup, even sickeningly selfish dreams like that can come true. All you have to do to get into the running for one of these superlative little hot-boxes is follow the instructions below. Nintendo are very generously giving away 50 Game Boys and to celebrate we've produced our own Game Boy Companion (mounted on the cover of this issue). Read it carefully: if your smart, it could unlock the secrets of the competition!

Right. Here's the nitty gritty. On these two pages you will find a short narrative report concerning one of the country's most influential personages. You will note that five words have been missed out. All you have to do is jot down each missing word on a postcard as instructed in the HOW TO ENTER BOX. It's as simple as that! So get to it, and you too could be going ping-ping-whizz instead of plink-plink-fizz in the New Year.

HOW TO ENTER

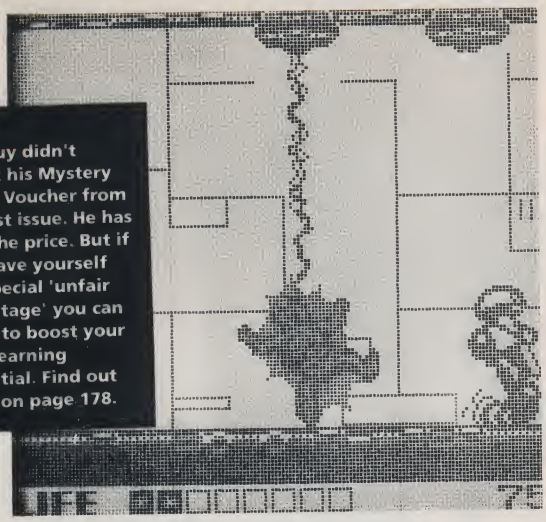
Here's how to enter the competition. It couldn't be easier....

1. Get yourself a blank postcard.
2. Read our very silly story, Game Prince Charlie. There are five words missing. Each missing word is numbered in the text.
3. Use your immense skill and awesome judgement to determine what the missing words are. Your cover booklet The Gameboy Companion will help with some of the answers. The booklet is free with this issue – if it was missing when you bought it, check with your newsagent.
4. Write down the five missing words, together with their numbers, on the postcard. EG 'Word Number 1 is Philip' and so on.
6. Write down your name, address, and (if possible) a daytime telephone number.
7. For our information (this is not part of the competition and is optional) tell us (a) which bit of this issue you liked best and (b) which bit you liked least.
8. Check the entry rules below, then post the card to:

ACE Gameboy Competition
Box 1
30-32 Farringdon Lane
London
EC1R 3AU

RULES

a) Employees of EMAP Images, Nintendo, and anyone involved in the manufacture, sale, or distribution of their products are not eligible for entry.
b) Closing date for entries is 7th December 1990
c) The winners of the 50 free Game Boys will be the first 50 correct qualifying entries drawn at random
d) Entries MUST be addressed as shown above. Incorrectly addressed entries will not be entered into the competition.
e) Only one entry per household.



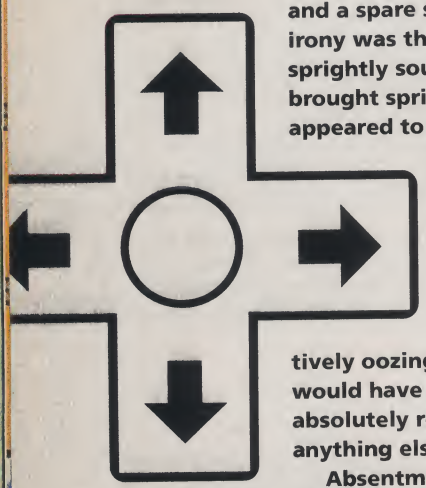
ZAP!
This guy didn't collect his Mystery Bonus Voucher from the last issue. He has paid the price. But if you gave yourself our special 'unfair advantage' you can use it to boost your prize earning potential. Find out more on page 178.

GAME PRINCE CHARLIE

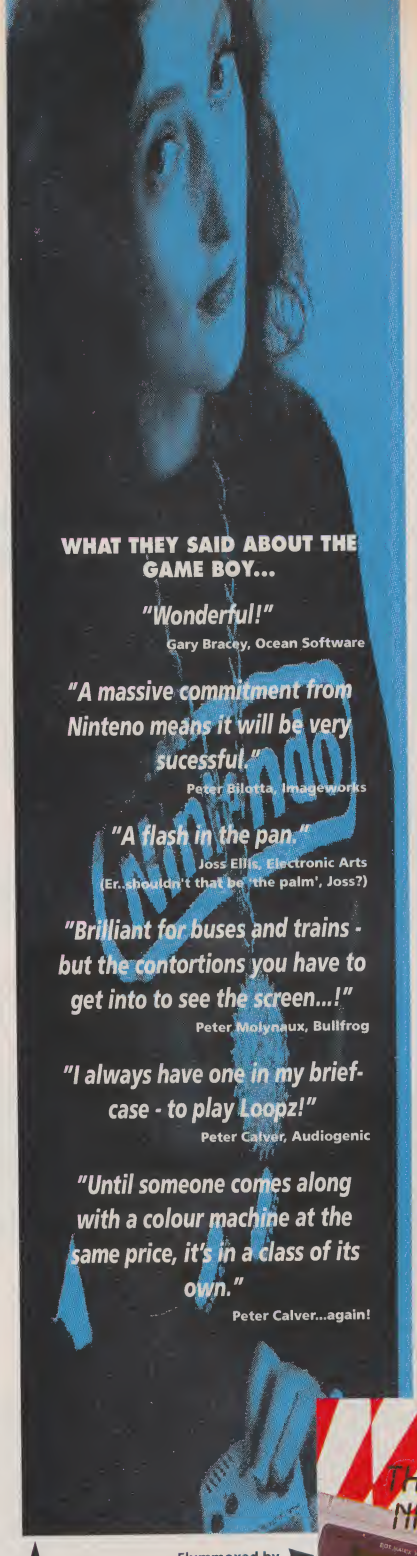
Dawn was poking its cheery face over the trees at the bottom of the garden as (1) stirred sleepily in his four poster bed. Somewhere in the distance came the disgruntled yap of a Corgi, followed by a yelp of pain. Old Cobbett was up to his tricks with the dogs again, shattering the fragile peace of early morning.

Charles turned over in his bed and slipped a hand under the pillow, feeling the reassuring bulk of his (2) where he had slipped it the night before, exhausted, after a vigorous round of *Paperboy*. Such larks! Despite the early hour, he felt a shiver of excitement as he contemplated the day ahead. Breakfast with Diana, followed by a few quick rounds of that Russian thingie, (3) , which should put him in a good position when he met that Gorby fellow for lunch.

If only Diana could share his new found enthusiasm for advanced computer entertainment, mused Charles, as the butler entered with a cup of tea, a charcoal bickie, and a spare set of batteries. The irony was that whereas the sprightly sound of dancing sprites brought spring to his heart, it appeared to send Diana screaming out of the room. Surely some of the games should take her fancy? What about (4) , where you had to collect the diamonds – positively oozing Princess appeal, one would have thought. But no, she absolutely refused to play ball, or anything else, for that matter.



Absentmindedly, he slipped the Game Boy out from under his (5) and fingered the switch, his restless soul eased by the innocent 'ping' as the machine booted up. How clever he'd been to persuade that Nintendo chappie to let him have one of his very own! And what a pity that the fellow hadn't had a spare to give to Diana! And how absolutely spiffing it was to be able to show her how jolly *good* he was getting at all those games! Strange, though, how offish she'd been recently...



Suzi Q of pop duo ST Melody. Their hit number is entitled *Mario In Wonderland*

Flummoxed by some of those missing words? Perhaps you should have taken a closer look at our Game Boy companion, free on this month's cover

NINTENDO HOTLINE

If you've got a Game Boy, you'll be pleased to hear that Nintendo have launched a UK Helpline. There are two numbers you could call. The first is 0626 65500 and has three operators to handle general enquiries. Then, from January 1st 1991, 0329 822662 will be open for club queries, new release information, and playing tips. Nintendo hope to build up the second number with as many as 20 operators by the end of 1991.

£1000 OF SOFTWARE STILL TO BE WON!

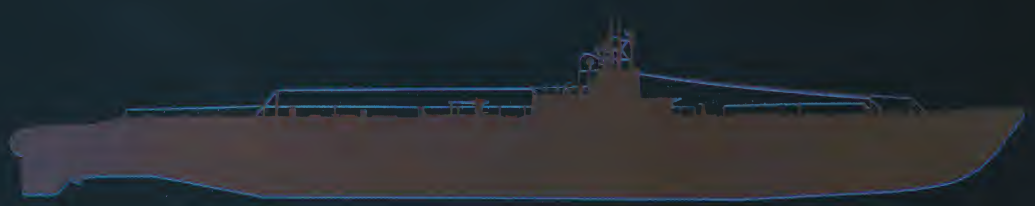
Last month's scratch card competition was one of the most popular we've ever run. And there are still some prizes to be claimed: including the £5000 first prize. That means that SOMEWHERE there's a card lying about that could revolutionise your gaming career! And there are still many free games left to be claimed. *

Meanwhile, here – as promised – are the contents of the 0898 numbers. There's still lots of time to get your claims in: the deadline is November 30th (1990, of course). Overseas readers (who may be unable to connect with the 0898 service) should check the number on their card with the list below.

- If your card bears the message WINNER 0898 334 301, you've won a discount off a game from the OCEAN list printed in the last issue.
- If your card bears the message WINNER 0898 334 302, you've won a discount off a game from the US GOLD list printed in the last issue.
- If your card bears the message WINNER 0898 334 303, you've won a discount off a game from the MIRRORSOFT list printed in the last issue.
- If your card bears the message WINNER 0898 334 304, you've won a discount off a game from the MICROPROSE list printed in the last issue.
- If you get the number 0898 334 305, you've won either a free game or – yay! – £5000 worth of software.

Follow the instructions given on pp46/47 of the last issue to claim your discount or prize.

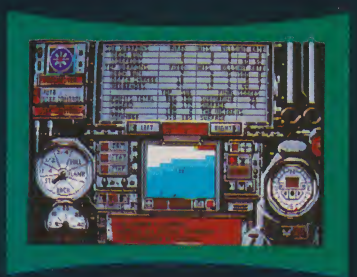
WOLF PACK



THE ODDS ARE EVEN . . . WILL YOU ENJOY A HERO'S WELCOME OR REST FOREVER IN AN ICY GRAVE?

WOLFPACK IS A PRECISE SIMULATION OF A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN A GERMAN SUBMARINE WOLFPACK AND AN ALLIED SHIPPING CONVOY. PLAY THE PART OF A WOLFPACK COMMANDER OR A CONVOY ESCORT COMMANDER TO EXPERIENCE THE REALISM OF A FULL SCALE, REAL TIME, STRATEGIC ENCOUNTER.

SCREEN SHOTS: PC VERSION



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DAY AND NIGHT MISSIONS
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ist this Christmas!

Golden

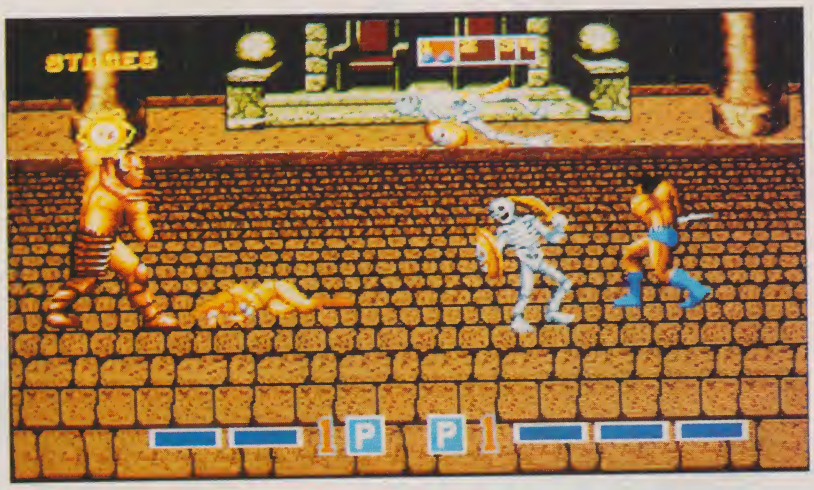
Sega's hack'n'slash coin-op, *Golden Axe*, is a very popular coin-op thanks to its simple gameplay and gorgeous graphics. And any arcade success must be converted. First came the critically acclaimed Megadrive conversion, now Virgin has turned *Golden Axe* into micro-code on the Spectrum, C64, Amiga, ST and CPC. So are you ready to slash some sprites and hack without hesitation?

Once upon a time in a strange kingdom filled with fire-breathing tax-collectors, an alliance of three brave warriors began a deadly quest for the Golden Axe. This is their story. The fair land of Yuria has been thrown into a state of chaos by Death Adder and his army of monster thugs. After savaging defenceless villages, this evil reptile has kidnapped the King and beautiful princess. Only one thing stands between Adder domination and lasting peace – and that's you.

Golden Axe is a six-stage horizontally-scrolling hack-everything-to-death beat'em-up. You (and a friend if you opt for the simultaneous two-player option) start the game by choosing to be one of the aforementioned warriors: Ax-Battler, Gilius-Thunderhead or Tyris-Flare. Armed with a sword or axe, your warrior has a full complement of combat manoeuvres such as punch, stab, slice, body twirl, body slam, kick and head-butt. Your Hit Meter shows how many hits you can take until you lose a life.

In addition, each warrior has an individual magic spell which you use as a 'smart bomb' to destroy all your enemies currently on-screen – though some may survive the devastation. The power of the spell depends on the amount of magic pots you're carrying (shown at the top of the screen). You collect magic pots – and bars for extra strength – by 'mugging' little Elves who appear throughout the game.

Warriors of the wastelands. These are the guys you can control: Ax-Battler the Barbarian heard his mother's final screams and she was put to death by Death Adder – now he wants revenge. Ax-Battler



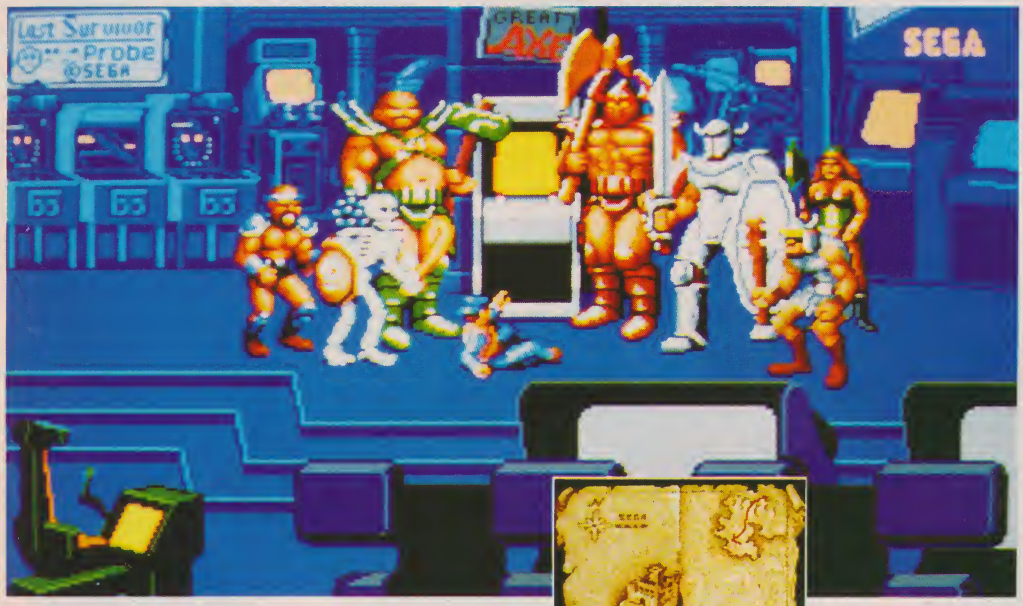
"Golden Axe on the Amiga looks good, plays well and has all the features you need."
Neil Young, Software Producer at Probe

TOTAL DEMENTIA

Dementia was the software development team in charge of the converting Golden Axe onto the Amiga. Richard Costello wrote the code and Kevin Bulmer produced the graphics. Additional graphics were provided by Mark Knowles and Adrian Carless. "Golden Axe on the Amiga is a hybrid of the Megadrive and coin-op versions," says Costello. "Everybody says the Megadrive version is identical to the coin-op, but it isn't. The Amiga version shares the coin-op's sprite designs but obviously doesn't have as many colours." The Amiga conversion has a two 16-colour palettes for the sprites and backdrops. The blitter and 68000 work overtime to produce a game that runs within a frame – 960 'blits' are performed every 1/50th of a second. "It stretches the boundaries of Amiga games," confidently states Costello. Costello even reflects the sprites in real-time. Golden Axe on the Amiga even includes subtle colour-changing during the six-stages. Some more Amiga Golden Axe tech-specs: over 600 sprite animations, max. sprite size of 64x96 pixels, 18 sound FX (including uppercut hit, pummel, hitting the ground and female/male scream) and 6 soundtracks (incorporating such classic tracks as 'Wilderness' and 'Pass of the Fiend'). Surprisingly Costello thinks Golden Axe has a lot more depth than the normal fighting game. He previously worked on Mask and Ramrod for Gremlin, Hot Rod for Activision and the C16 version of Way of the Exploding Fist for Melbourne House.

Axe

As VIRGIN goes on a coin-op hack attack, Rik Haynes is there to pick up the pieces



ACE PREPLAY

Amiga Golden Axe FOR:
- Very close to the coin-op and Sega Megadrive versions.
- Bright colourful sprites.
- Has a neat 'arcade' feel.

Amiga Golden Axe AGAINST:
- Gameplay lacks variety and quickily becomes repetitive.
- Like the original coin-op, the game does not possess any depth.

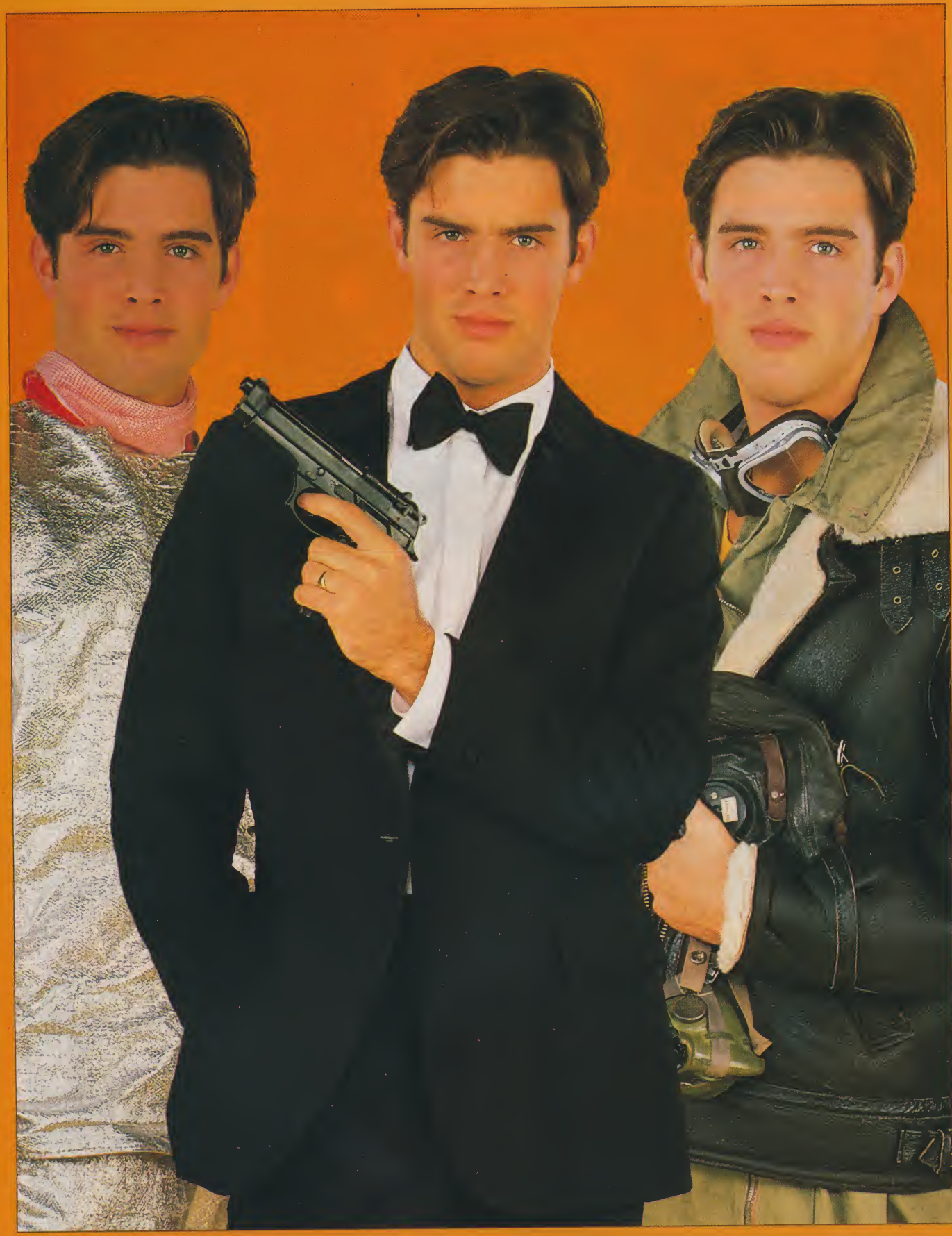
can command up to four levels of Volcano Magic. Tyris-Flare is a tough Amazon warrior, the last surviving member of her jungle tribe. When she's really angry she can command up to six levels of Fire Magic. Gilius-Thunderhead lost his twin-brother in a fight against Adder's soldiers. His speciality is somersauting and scorching his enemies with up to three levels of Lightning Magic.

Battle beyond the sprites. Between a walk in the woods and the final confrontation with Death Adder, you meet Twin Brutes, Lizard Women, Skeleton Swordsmen and Bizarrians – Death Adder's riding-beasts. If you knock an enemy off the back of a Bizarrian, you can mount the creature yourself and spit flames and twirling fireballs, or wallop people with its tail. Golden Axe even includes a Turtle Village, though fortunately there's no sign of any teenage mutant ninjas.

Probe handled the micro-conversions of *Golden Axe*. The Amiga version of *Golden Axe* was written by Dementia (the software development team responsible for Core's ACE-Rated *Corporation*). David Whitaker provided the music, and three graphics artists worked on the game. David Shea programmed the Spectrum and CPC conversions, with graphics by Jason Green and music by Sound Images. The Design Team (the same guys who produced the C64 version of *Turbo Outrun* last year) wrote *Golden Axe* on the C64 – Mark Kelly programmed, Steve Crow designed the graphics. Golden Axe's manual was even written by ex-ACE editor Graeme Kidd.

ACE played the near-completed versions of the game on Amiga (see the Pre-Play panel further details) and CPC. *Golden Axe* on the Amiga is very close to the original coin-op. All the important features have been included and the graphics and sound bear a close resemblance to the technically-superior arcade machine. The CPC version suffers a little in the scrolling department (it's a bit jerky) but has colourful, detailed sprites and backdrops. ACE's only worry about converting *Golden Axe* onto micros is the original's lack of gameplay variety and depth. But as Neil Young (Software Producer at Probe) points out, "Our brief was not to enhance or modify *Golden Axe*, but stay within the limits of the target machine". *Golden Axe* may only keep you hooked for hours instead of days or weeks. Still, you'll have immense fun slashing and bashing creatures from a fantasy world, especially during the simultaneous two-player option – you can even hack each-other to bits!

The problem with life is



that you only live it once.

One lifetime of experiences, one lifetime of fun.

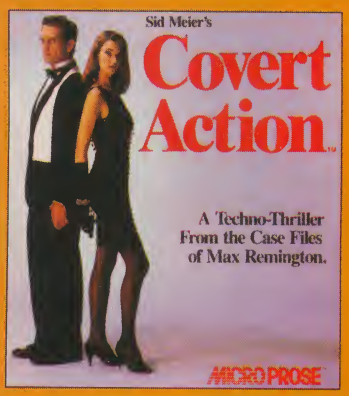
And that seems a little harsh.

As the leading force in simulation software, we try to expand horizons at MicroProse. So, this Christmas, we're giving you three different lives to live. Three stunning experiences. Three lots of fun.

THE PAST

The date is 1914, and you are a British, American or French flying ace of World War I, attempting to take out Axis pilots in hair-raising dogfights and shoot down Zeppelins before they can cross the channel. "Knights of the Sky" is historically accurate, allowing you to use more sophisticated and powerful aircraft as you move towards 1918, navigating by map and compass, just like the real aerial combat pioneers of seventy five years ago. You can even end up challenging the the best hot-shot pilots that Germany could put into the air, such as Oswald Boelcke, Max Immelman, or even the great Baron von Richtofen, the Red Baron himself. "Knights of the Sky" features MicroProse's acclaimed 3D graphics system, further enhanced and improved, taking the flight sim genre into a whole new era. Available initially on IBM PC compatible machines, Atari ST and Commodore Amiga versions will follow shortly.

THE PRESENT



The 1990's are the age of international crime, terrorism and espionage - and you are the clandestine superspy charged with travelling the globe to combat these forces in MicroProse's new techno-thriller, "Covert Action". Using the latest electronic bugging techniques, high tech intelligence sources and good old fashioned clue hunting, its up to you to identify the ringleaders and bring them to justice. Become expert in wiretapping, decipher acquired information with the aid of sophisticated code-breaking programs, and use surveillance to complete the picture. And if your technological know-how, cunning and luck ever let you down, you've always got the latest combat weapons such as CS gas, stun grenades and compact sub-machine guns to help you out. Across Europe, the Middle East and Central America, with 16 cities to cover in each area, you'll have your work cut out to make sense of the allegiances between numerous terrorist groups, known political activists and foreign spies, all undertaking "Covert Action". Available for IBM PC compatible computers.

THE FUTURE

The end of the 21st century. The Earth is an ecological wasteland. Nuclear meltdowns, climate alteration, species extinction; all have taken their toll. Humanity must evacuate its mother world, to give the Earth time to recover from the devastation wrought by past civilisations. The human species has left Earth in immense transport ships. You are the pilot of a Trailblazer series dreadnought, sent ahead of the main ships to prepare an alien star cluster for human colonization. You must find a planet suitable for humanity and obtain the resources the fledgling colony needs to survive, by mining them from unclaimed worlds or through interplanetary commerce with friendly aliens. You must make the cluster as safe as possible for human families by making friends and eliminating enemies. Flying at incredible speeds through deep space, the many lifeforms you encounter will see you, quite correctly, as the alien. "Lightspeed" is MicroProse's first space simulation and it is one which will set new standards by which others will be judged. Original music scores and the latest in 3D light sourced graphics provide the stunning technical backdrop for your journey as you fight, trade, and talk your way towards your goal of finding a new planet for your people. "Lightspeed" will initially be available for IBM PC compatible computers.

MicroProse bring worlds to life.

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Three stunning experiences. Three lots of fun.

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AVAILABLE ON AMIGA, ATARI ST, CBM 64, AMSTRAD, SPECTRUM.
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An evil force of monster machines has risen to conquer the Galaxy. One by one the peaceful races of the Galaxy have been attacked and enslaved by the Cyborg Monsters. No race has the strength to stand against the power of the Cyborgs. One lone rebel rises from within the ranks of the mechanised monsters. Part dragon, part machine, the Cyborg Warrior fights back against the tyrant masters. The Galaxy has a Hero. Hope returns to the hearts of the people at the rise of the armoured champion they call "ST DRAGON".
" I haven't seen a decent shoot-em-up for ages (in fact Silkworm was probably the last). Now this looks set to end with a product from the very same Silkworm programmers that could challenge the mighty R-Type itself!"
(Zero Sep. 1990)
THE SALES CURVE
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Kick Off 2: looking good on a state-of-the-art Philips monitor

Light Fantastic

The company that's bringing you CD-I has got three superb colour monitors for lucky ACE readers.

Dutch giants Philips have produced just about every conceivable electrical device for the home, many of which have been innovative and influential.

Having made its presence felt in the computer market in previous years, (an early eighties console, PC compatibles and the like) Philips return with a successor to their immensely successful 14 inch colour monitor (the CM8833), with the MkII version. The original CM8833 has notched up over 2 million sales worldwide (four of them are in the ACE office) since its launch four years ago, enjoying success as a multi-functional monitor for both games and business-applications.

The latest model has been redesigned and upgraded with 1992's single European Market and compatibility firmly in mind. Fortunately for you, 1992 will come sooner than you think, because not only do the Dutch give us diamonds, cheese and tulips, but they give us monitors as well - 3 to be precise. All you have to do to win one of these sleek new screens, is discover all 12 words hidden deviously within the grid. Each is associated with the new CM8833/MkII and our thanks go to Philips and Mathieu Thomas (PR) for the prizes.

TECH-SPECS

The CM8833/MkII is compatible with a wide range of computers including the Amiga, Atari, IBM PC and laptop computers, and incorporates TTL digital, RGB analog and CVBS input signals (the first two for computer and the latter for video). Sound output is delivered in stereo and may be run through an in-built headphone socket. The 14-inch slotted anti-glare screen sports a CRT pitch of 0.42mm, a resolution of 600x285, line frequency of 15.6 kHz and 2000 characters per screen.. The monitor can also receive TV pictures with an optional tuner, while a fast blanking feature allows superimposition of computer graphics over video images.

If all of the above means as much to you as a Bessel Function (?), what it all boils down to is a rather sexy monitor that gives you a clear, crisp picture and real stereo delivery.

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R	U	O	L	O	C	Z	Y	E
E	G	E	B	O	G	S	T	S
L	O	L	O	U	R	N	I	O
B	L	D	C	X	D	M	R	L
I	A	I	I	Y	A	O	A	U
T	N	S	C	G	A	N	L	T
A	A	P	E	K	I	I	C	I
P	H	L	K	L	V	T	B	O
M	N	A	L	P	G	O	A	N
O	M	Y	J	N	L	R	P	L
C	S	P	I	L	I	H	P	Y

PHILIPS COMPO: HOW TO ENTER

Locate the twelve words on the grid. Words can go up or down, forwards or backwards, and on diagonals. Then simply jot them down (on a postcard only, please) together with your name, address, and daytime phone number (if possible). Post to: ACE PHILIPS COMP, Box 3, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Make sure you read the rules below before sending in your entry.

1. Deadline for entries is Thursday 6th December.
2. The winners will be the first three correct entries drawn at random from the qualifying entries.
3. Unstamped or incorrectly addressed entries will not be eligible for entry.
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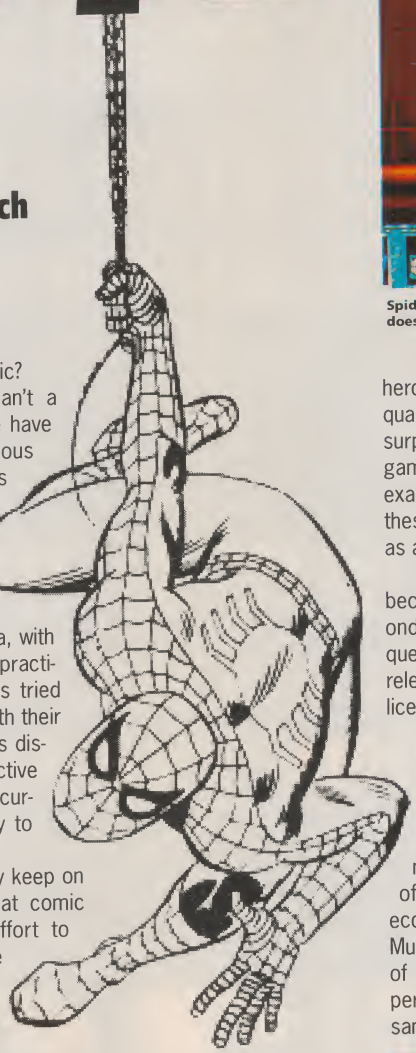
SILICON STRIPS

...or silicon strip offs?

ACE investigates the latest batch of comic-inspired releases

Judge Dredd makes a definite effort to mimic the original's graphic humour. That Fattie there is going to cause our hero serious damage on impact...

Spiderman's scenario is disturbingly similar to Jet Set Willy – but Spidey does get up to some impressive acrobatics.



Why can't a game be like a comic? Or, for that matter, why can't a comic be like a game? There have to be some pretty obvious answers to these questions but, notwithstanding the obvious differences between games and comics, softcos persist in trying to borrow the glamour of the world's more successful strips and varnishing their products with it. Cinema, with its big budgets and star promotions, means that practically every software company under the sun has tried the 'interactive movie' marketing slant; comics, with their high graphic content, cult status, and cheap mass distribution, have a similar effect. So called 'interactive comics' go back a long way and, judging by the current batch of releases, have still got a long way to go.

But you've got to hand it to the softcos. They keep on trying. When you've paid heavy pennies for that comic license, you've got to make at least some effort to ensure that your program reflects the atmosphere of the great original.

Game designers and programmers have taken different approaches to this thorny problem, ranging from the bizarre to the ingenious. Remember Slaine, where the central figure had continual 'thoughts' scrolling above his head – you had to grab them as they floated past to get him to do anything. Weird, huh? Other approaches were more mind-numbingly literal: Melbourne House's Redhawk and Kwah! configured the screen as a comic strip in glorious monochrome. Frames scrolled past horizontally (and slowly) as Redhawk acted according to your commands. Yes, it did look terrible.

Other softcos took a more relaxed approach. Take the hero, shove him in a scenario that somehow reflects his qualities or character, and damn the rest. Perhaps it's not surprising that this approach has resulted in the best games: the original Dan Dare from Virgin, to take one example – or Batman from Ocean. Very sensibly, neither of these games made any attempt to LOOK like a comic, and as a result they didn't play like one either. Just as well.

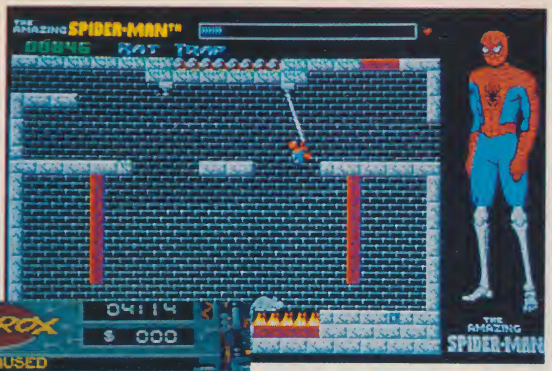
However, just because games like those weren't bad because they put gaming first and comic presentation second doesn't explain why they were any good. With that question in mind, we've checked out the current comic releases and tried to determine what makes a good comic license....if there be such a thing...

ATMOSPHERE

First, comics succeed when they generate atmosphere. 2000AD (one of the most prolific licensors into software formats) once ran a strip (not one of its most successful) called Metalzoic – a tremendous epic of a time when the world was dominated by a robotic ecology and distinguished by almost no speech at all. Much of the strip was concerned with textless sequences of tumultuous action, generating bags of atmosphere but perhaps a little obscure for the little ones. However, that same atmosphere underpins the success of Judge Dredd

BECOME A COMIC STAR!

We've got a great competition next month to celebrate our review of Rogue Trooper. Rogue Trooper artist Dave Gibbons will be conspiring with Krisalis to give you an opportunity not only to win some original Rogue artwork but also to star in it yourself! Don't miss it in the next issue of ACE, out Thursday 6th December.



Swinging on the rope with Spiderman...the screens combine puzzle solving with acrobatic timing problems. One sad point – the pace of the game is rather slow. One good point – there are lots of screens.

Ranx sequences often end up with piles of bodies on the floor. Just like the original, but hardly startlingly original stuff in gameplay terms

and Rogue Trooper. Any game wanting to capitalise on that has to have programmers and designers that are fully in tune with the original. Andy Wilson, one of the principal programmers of Dan Dare, was a rabid Dare fan. Coincidence? Surely not.

GRAPHICS

Graphic presentation is obviously a very important part of the comic recipe. Unfortunately it's highly detailed, with wide variations in colour (often monochrome). It's also, of course, static. Comic art styles could, however, be better implemented in screen designs than at present. Of the games under consideration, only Dredd and Spiderman (plus, judging by the demo disk, Hagar) really borrow the graphic style of the originals. A pity.

CHARACTER

Most comic strips have one central hero who's personal idiosyncrasies make him both attractive and compelling. Dredd may be the Law, but he also shows occasional self-doubt. Rogue may be half-machine, but he's also half-man, as his fantasies about his lost love frequently reveal. Ranx may be all machine, but his exuberance is all human. Spiderman may be a super-hero but' like Batman, he's also more vulnerable than most of his impervious companions. Any game scenario has to recreate that character as far as is possible in terms of both scenario and game objectives.

NARRATIVE

Apart from the above, the other essence-of-comic is straightforward narrative. A good strip needs a good story. If your game simply consists of a series of bang-bang encounters followed by a congratulation sequence then you haven't got a real story. Early comic games like Questprobe's Spiderman were pretty heavy on story – a pity they weren't heavy on gameplay as well.

Check out this spread for the rest of the story...

One technique to identify your game with the original comic production is simply to borrow the artwork lock, stock, and barrel. Unfortunately, comic frames aren't designed with interaction in mind, so they tend to end up as intros to game sections. Here are three examples of static screens: two strangely similar ones from Dredd and Rogue and from Ranx.

THE GAMES

RANX
Ubisoft
ST, Amiga, PC £24.99 Imminent
C64 £9.99cs • £14.99dk

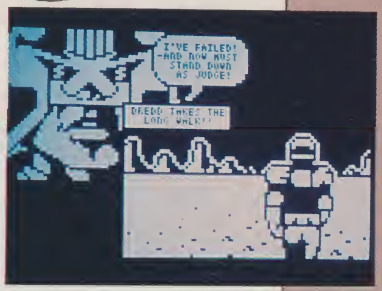
Ranx punches his way through a decaying urban environment, accompanied by a slick user interface that enables you to interrogate bystanders and carry on limited encounters. The atmosphere of the game is a reasonable reflection of the original but the efferescent originality of the strip hero is heavily compromised by extreme lack of originality in the punch/kick/grab scenario. The storyline, concerning plague medicine, is more complex than some other games in this selection but fails to compromise for the otherwise standard fare.

ROGUE TROOPER
Krisalis
ST/Amiga £24.99 Imminent

Slick beat-em-up arcade adventure as you escape from the Norts in an episode from the infamous 2000AD Nu-Earth futuristic war scenario. The slickness, however, hasn't contributed much in the way of originality and the colourful graphic design is rather a long way from the nihilistic atmosphere of the original. However, the programming here is certainly on a par with the best of the rest and the game combines some scrolling flight sequences with punch-ups and simple object-based puzzles. Nothing in the game, however, that really tells you much about the principal hero.

JUDGE DREDD
Virgin
Spectrum, C64, CPC $14.99 dk • £9.99cs
Amiga, ST £19.99 Imminent

Does a reasonable job of capturing some of the graphic humour of the popular 2000AD series – witness the Fatties in the screenshot elsewhere – and the backdrops seem suitably Mega City One-ish. Dredd can walk or mount his bike as he patrols the city and busts up crime situations by achieving simple gameplay objectives. The idea of keeping down the crime rate and blasting the perps is in tune with our hero, but this good news is drastically devalued by the gameplay which varies from the frustrating to the obvious but rarely seems even vaguely inspired. Neat packaging (e.g. Dredd's personal computer log-on sequence at the beginning) save this from total disaster.



SPIDERMAN
Empire
PC, Amiga, ST, C64, Spectrum, CPC £TBA

Jet Set Willy for 1990, but with a wall-creeping, web-slinging hero. Despite the appallingly outdated game style, in which you solve puzzles in a series of rooms before a final confrontation, the animation and control of Spidey really does conjure up some of the original excitement. Being able to walk along the ceiling also makes for some slightly more interesting puzzles. The graphic style isn't that Spidermannish, however, and the central sprite, although attractive in motion, is too small to carry graphic conviction.

HAGAR THE HORRIBLE
Kingsoft

Release details to be announced.
Still only in demo stage, but the graphics are large and very much in the original style. An unknown at the time of going to press...

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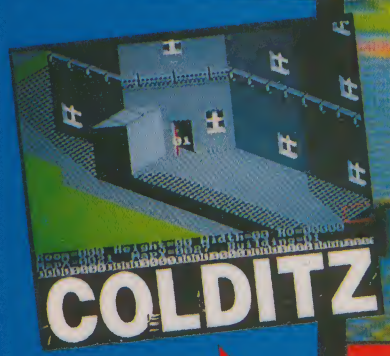

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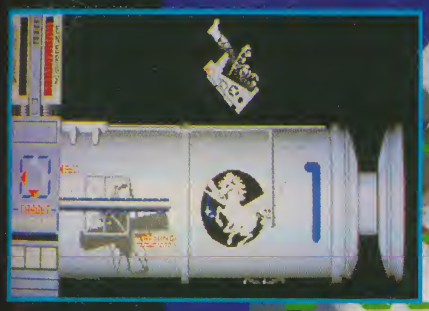

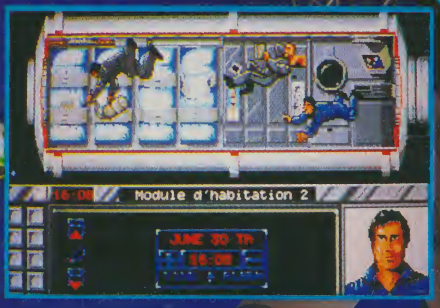

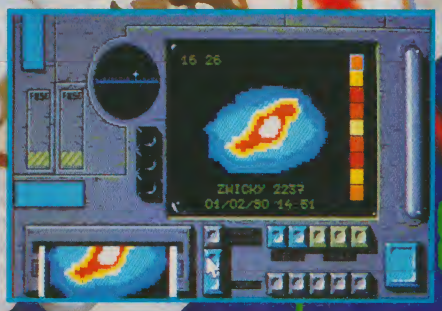

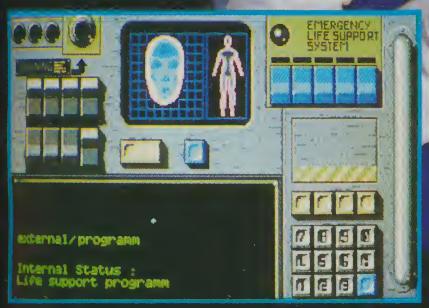

Everything was running like clockwork on the orbital station PEGASUS. The discrete vibration of the apparatus assured the eight members of the staff concentrating on their experiments. Calm stillness everywhere... until the discovery of the first victim. Then the adventure tumbled into horror.

INFOGRAMES

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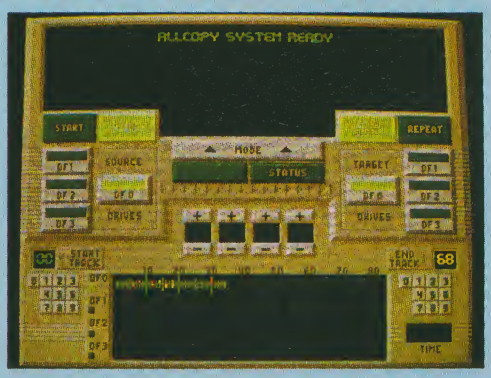
WARNING: Because ACS copies all Amiga software it's use to copy and distribute commercial software is illegal.

The utility program set following ACS is usable even without an extra diskdrive. The set includes several functions which make the copyprocess and it's surveillance easier. One function different from other copy programs is being able to see from screen what kind of error was made and in which diskdrive, on which diskside and on which sector. This is possible whether you used your Amiga's own diskdrive or 3 extra diskdrives. ACS is at least as necessary investment as buying an extra RAM memory or an extra diskdrive.



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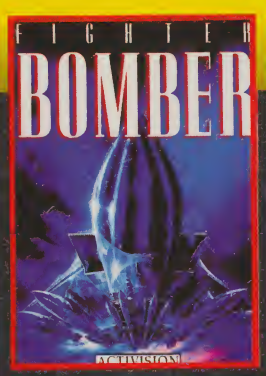
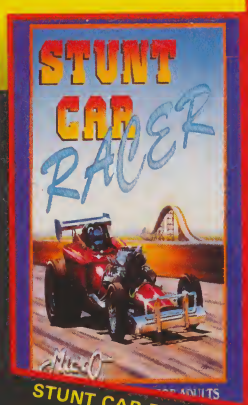
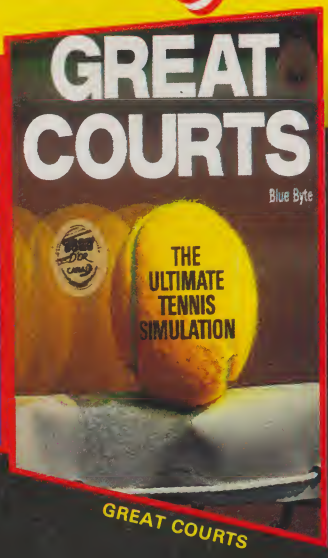


FIGHTER BOMBER



STUNT CAR RACER



GREAT COURTS

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NOTE 1! KICK OFF is not avaible in the PC version.
NOTE 2! In the SPECTRUM version STUNT CAR RACER and SUPERSKI are replaced by CARRIER COMMAND, P 47 and RICK DANGEROUS.

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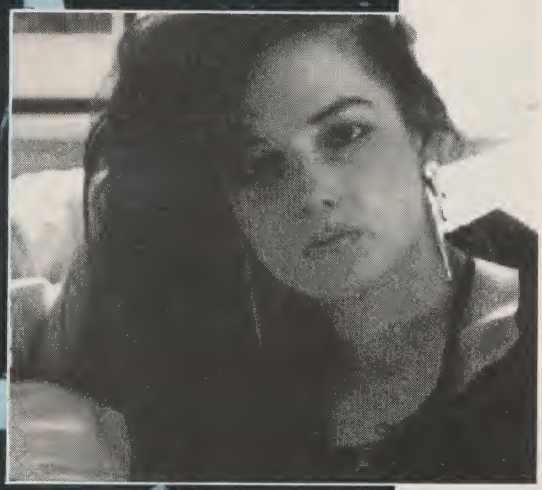
The Final Assault

Games designer Matthew Stibbe concludes his mini-series on the design and coding of Domark's *'Nam*



Janine Hodgson-Jones, graphic designer for *'Nam*

"And it's one, two, three, what are we fighting for?
I don't give a damn,
Next stop is Vietnam..."
Country Joe Macdonald

Last month I described how I went about designing Domark's *'Nam*. This month, as promised, I'll cover some of the technical issues that came up during the game's implementation.

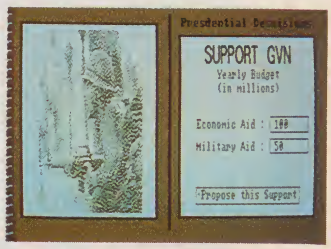
In my last article I described the problem of designing a coherent and intuitive metaphor for a game. *'Nam* uses the idea of a Presidential report including all the information needed to make decisions, a newspaper, and maps. The player makes presidential decisions by entering details into this report. Apparently even this was too complicated for President Reagan, who had to have video presentations and who made his decisions by ticking in boxes marked 'approved' or 'disapproved'! The military decisions are made by interaction with the map. It is easy enough to say all this in a game design document, but how to implement it?

This was the question I faced in early June of this year when I began programming the first Macintosh version of the game. I approached the problem by designing a prototype using 'Hypercard' which allows you to place graphics, text, scrolling lists, buttons and editable text on hypertext-linked 'cards'. Using this, and the graphics that Janine Hodgson-Jones had prepared beforehand, I came up with a working prototype that looked very much like the current version of the game.

I then took this 'stack' (as a Hypercard file is known) as a model, and implemented in 'C' (*Think C V4.0* to be precise) all the basic user interface items that I had used in the prototype. This meant that I had to re-implement scrolling lists, buttons, text from scratch. Luckily the Mac ROM's give you a lot of help, if you don't mind reading the 2000+ pages of 'Inside Macintosh' (I cheated because I have Apple's CD-ROM version which is much quicker than looking things up in the paper version's five volumes). Nevertheless the code for the user interface came to about 150k of source code, including all the code to buffer the screen so that redrawing appears instantaneous.

As I have been programming the Mac for over three years in *Object Pascal* and *MacApp* (a brilliant Smalltalk like object oriented environment for the Mac with another 2000+ page manual!) I tried to make the code interface to this set of user interface building blocks as 'object-orientated' as possible. This means that it is possible to define as many screens and with as many different user interface bits and pieces as I wanted simply by giving short descriptions of what I wanted and where it should be. Some screens can be described in less than a dozen lines of code.

I originally designed and tested the models for the game in *Excel* (a Mac and PC based spreadsheet). I updated the models and tested the further using a fantastic programme called *Stella* which makes it very easy to model the kind of complex dynamic models used in *'Nam* or *Imperium*. Programming the models was therefore simply a matter of taking the formulae from *Stella* and expressing them in C.



Even President Nixon dictated military strategy by ticking boxes on the reports from his advisers!

While the Mac version was being developed I recieved a great deal of help and advice from a small group of Beta testers, who were never slow with constructive criticism. I am sure the game is better for the help, but any faults that remain are, of course, mine! All the beta testing was carried our using Applelink and CIX (both electronic conferencing systems – Applelink is Apple's own network) to store test files, and to exchange comments about the game. Often I would upload the latest version at 7pm, and there would be comments on it by 9!

The PC version was started when the Mac version was nearly complete. I worked with another PC programmer, until he fell ill, and I had to complete that version by myself.

It was programmed using *Microsoft C V.6.0*. The biggest problem that confronted me with the PC version was how to re-implement the user interface code without using up loads of memory (which is at a premium on a PC thanks to DOS), and, more importantly, without spending days wrestling with video cards and screen modes.

Microsoft Windows, which initially I preferred, was ruled out because of the cost of bundling the four disk run-time version. After some searching and desperation(!) I struck upon a software library called 'Metawindows'. Amazingly, this provides device independant graphics for the PC, and even more impressively does so using function calls that correspond parameter by parameter with the Mac equivelents. Thanks to this, programming the user interface on the PC took about two months. At first we used different coordinate systems for different screen modes - 640x480 in 16 colours for VGA, 640x200 mono for CGA and so on.

Once I added all the models and combat code, there was no room for the two offscreen buffers that I had used in the Mac version when running VGA. With some reluctance, I decided to adopt a universal 640x200 in all modes, simply varying the colour depth to suit the graphics card. This makes it easier to do some things, but having achieved a working VGA version it was disappointing to have prune the programme like this. If anyone wants a VGA version that flickers, perhaps they might like to write me! Just Kidding!

Luckily there are no such memory problems on the Mac, and so the Mac version will run in 256 colours on a 640x480 screen if you have the memory, otherwise it will run in mono in progressively smaller windows.

I cannot speak for Colin Boswell of the Kremlin who is working on the ST and Amiga versions of the game, suffice to say that I have seen the work in progress and it seems as faithful an implementation of the original as is possible, and that he is trying to take advantage of the individual machines where possible (for example using gadgets on the Amiga version).

Finally, I must add that I was sustained throughout the long development of this game by copious amounts of coffee, the wonderful source code management tools of Apple's Mac Programmer's Workshop, and (of course) a very scratchy tape of the Woodstock concert from the 60's, and especially by the recording of Country Joe and the Fish!

SOBERING FACTS PT 1
Between 1961 and 1973, 47,244 US servicemen were killed and 303,704 wounded by direct enemy action.

SOBERING FACTS PT 2
4 generals, 8 colonels, and 61 Lt Colonels died in action.

SOBERING FACTS PT 3
65% of injuries came from shrapnel fragments, 16% from small arms fire. 86% of those wounded survived thanks to swift mede-vac and advanced medical facilities.

SOBERING FACTS PT 4
Booby traps and mines deprived 10,000 victims of one or more limbs – more than WW2 and Korea put together.

THE WHOLE SAD STORY CONTD.

1967 was a year of big battles, and marked a major U.S. offensive in the South. However, the doctrine of area warfare, limited numbers, and the mobility of the enemy meant that the army had little to show for its efforts in terms of captured ground, or moral victory. Instead it had bodycounts, and captured stores and weapons. The American people were told that these meant victory.

In 1968, these myths were exploded by the Tet offensive. This was in many ways as ineffective as the American attacks made the year before. It was not so much the communists abortive attempt to start a military assisted revolution in the South, but its ability to mount nationwide attacks in strength that astounded public opinion. In the end it was a military disaster for the communists, the V.C. ceased to be an effective fighting force, and had to be bailed out by more and more NVN regulars. However, it was a great political, moral and propaganda victory. If the south Vietnamese did not rise in support of the Communists it was not because of their support for the Saigon government, but because of their resignation - there had been war in SE Asia since the begining of the Second World War.

1969 marked a turnaround for the Americans. They began to look for a way to extract themselves from a war that was increasingly unpopular, and expensive. Indeed, many werte convinced by Tet that it was unwinnable. 1970 to 1972 marked the phased withdrawal of American ground forces, and the emphasis on Vietnamization, whereby the armed forces of the south were expanded and equipped, regardless of their chronic inability to fight. It was ineffect a sell out by the Americans, and I believe that they knew that South Vietnam would not long outlast the Peace treaty made in 1973. This, I think is borne out by the fact that no American assistance was forthcoming when South Vietnamese resistence crumbled when the North launched their final victorious offensive against the South in 1975.

One of the attractive full colour maps from the Mac version. You can dictate military strategy and tactics directly from these screens

FIGHTING TALK – GLOSSARY OF 'NAM TERMS

Airmobility The use of helicopters to move troops

Airstikes Airborne indirect firepower

Arclight A strike by B52 bombers - 3 bombers could flatten an area of 5 square km's

ARVN Army of the Republic of Vietnam, army of SVN

B52's Strategic nuclear bombers converted to carry up to 82,000 lbs of bombs

Battalion See division

Brigade See division

Commitment A measure of material commitment, and hence political commitment to the war by all sides

Corps area Pronounced 'core', these were the military regions of South Vietnam, starting with I Corps (pronounced 'eye-core'!) in the North and IV Corps in the South.

Division A division comprises 3 brigades, which in turn comprise three battalions. Each subordinate unit has its own HQ (NLF), in the case of the US HQ elements have been divided into their subordinate units. A name such as 1/2/12, would indicate the first battalion of the 2nd brigade of the 12 division.

FWA Free World Allies, units of SEATO countries that fought in S. Vietnam

Game turn The shortest game turn lasts one week.

Ho Chi Minh The leader of NVN (trans (I think) "the one who enlightens")

Ho Chi Minh Trail Supply lines through Laos and Cambodia to SVN, from the North

I Corps The northernmost military region - pronounced (eye - core)

II Corps The area containing the central highlands

III Corps Area containing Saigon

IV Corps The southernmost area of South Vietnam, mostly marsh, and rice paddies.

Indirect firepower Firepower coming from outside the combat zone - from naval, air, or artillery gunfire

IndoChina The area of SE Asia - includes Cambodia Laos and the two Vietnams

Khe Sanh US combat base, in the highlands of I Corps, also siege of Khe Sanh, in 1968

My Lai Massacre of civilians, by US troops under Lt. Calley

NVN North Vietnamese (the communists!), also their army

Outrages Events that are unpopular, and probably immoral - like My Lai

Pacification US and SVN program, to 'convert' the peasants - in the game the process of working out population control

Rangers A type of US infantry unit

RAR Royal Australian Regiment

Regular VC These were the VC units that did most of the fighting, smaller VC units were confined to guerilla operations

Reserves A pool of troops, raised like ordinary units, used to replace combat losses - a way of representing the political cost of casualties

ROK Republic of Korea

Scenario A set of data that will recreate the circumstances, in game turns, of a particular historical incident

Search and Destroy Name of standard US military tactic - speaks for itself

Stack A group of units operating together

Strategic bombing Bombing of the North and the trail by both B52's and tactical bombers

SVN South Vietnam also in this document the government of SVN

Tet An offensive launched by the Communists, on the Tet holiday 1968

Trail See Ho Chi Minh Trail

Unit A military unit, in game terms the smallest is a battalion the largest a division.

VC Viet Cong (trans:Vietnamese Communists) -SVN guerillas, sponsored by NVN

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Now, with the release of the Atari and Amiga versions reviewers are reaching for their dictionaries to find new superlatives. ZERO described the game as 'totally excellent', the sound as 'absolutely brilliant' 89%; Your Amiga rated it 'the best soccer simulation to date – 95%'; YC World Cup Winner 97%.

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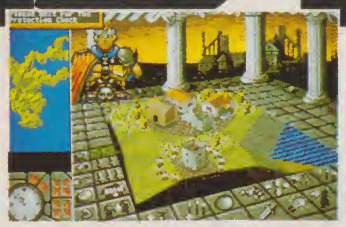
SCREEN TEST



Powermonger: following the exclusive ACE preplay in issue 37, the finished version is reviewed on page 59

ACE RATED!

Question: Is this game really going to grab me? And for how long?
Answer: the PIC curve – the heart of the **ACE Rating System.**

The PIC – *Predicted Interest Curve*
– is the most sophisticated reviewing tool around.

We on ACE know you don't just play a game – you experience it. The Predicted Interest Curve is the only review system that takes this all-important factor into account.

The curve is divided into six sections, indicating the player's adrenalin level after one minute, one hour, one day, one week, one month, and one year. And this can tell you a lot more about a game than just the interest levels...

For example, a high one minute rating means that the game must look fantastic and get you all excited from the word go. That means it's probably a good game to show off to the neighbours – who probably aren't going to pay attention for much more than a minute anyway.

The minute, hour, and day ratings can tell you a lot too. If there's a dip here, followed by a rise, you've got a game that may take a bit of getting into. Alternatively, the graphics may put you off for a while until the gameplay starts to grip. Check out the PIC comment for more details.

Finally, you've got the month and year ratings. The better a game holds up here the more deserving it is of your hard earned cash.

The packaging and presention are mediocre, but after a few minutes the depth of gameplay really bites. Unfortunately a repetitive challenge means it's downhill from there on...

- **The very fast multi-level parallax scrolling**
- **Excellent sound effects in the dentist's waiting room**
- **Gameplay in the 3D maze Barbican section**

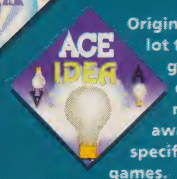
- **Limited use of objects**
- **Over-frequent disk access**
- **Colour combinations in the bedroom scene**

We won't rate a game unless it represents what you'll find on the shelves. If a game's not finished, we won't rate it. Instead we give it an ACE Preplay verdict panel that tells you how we think it's shaping up. In most cases, a full review of the finished game will follow in a later issue.

ACE AWARDS

ACE always awards seals of approval for outstanding software performance. If a game really breaks the boundaries in sound, graphics, or originality you'll see the appropriate ACE Award flash on the review. Unless it's truly dire – in which case it'll get the ACE Turkey award. Software houses: you have been warned!

ACE only awards this one to games of outstanding quality. A 900+ game is a classic title, recommended without hesitation.



Originality counts for a lot these days, and any games that have it deserve a special mention. This ACE award is reserved specifically for these rare games.

One of the first things to grab you in a game is its graphics. Games that redefine the state-of-the-art get this seal of approval from ACE.

Sound is the 'forgotten' aspect of games – but can make or break them. ACE only awards this one to brilliant use of audio in a game.

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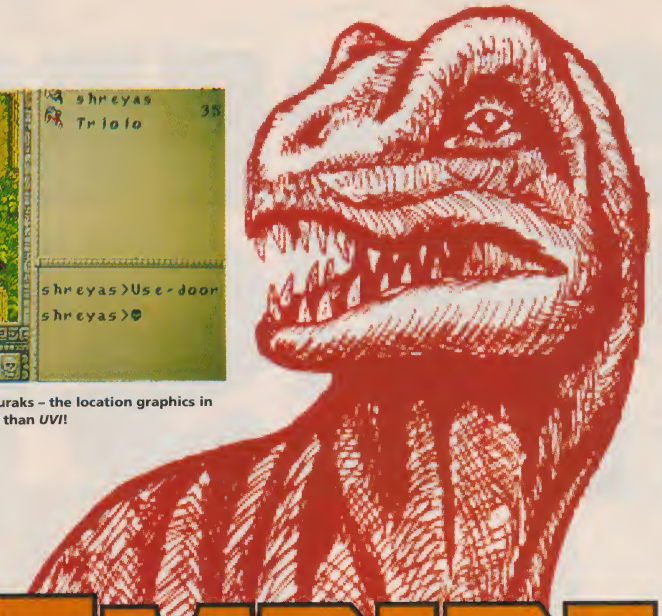
111 **LIVING BOOKS** *CDTV*

In the village of the friendly Kuraks – the location graphics in *Savage Empire* are even better than *UVI*!



SAVAGE EMPIRE

Origin must be developing a strong claim to the Software House of the Year Award. First, *Ultima VI* transformed the Ultima series with yet another quantum leap in playability. Then Chris '*Bad Blood*' Roberts brought us the superlative *Wing Commander* and now – can you take it? – they've delivered another masterpiece. The only problem is going to be convincing you that it's as good as it is...

The problem's a real one and it arises because of the prejudices that many gamesplayers have about *Ultima*–style games. These prejudices fall into two categories. The first is based on actual personal experience of early *Ultimas*. These were graphically hideous and had extended, but very obscure, gameplay. You either loved them or loathed them. The second category belongs to people who lump *Ultima* games together with other pseudo-RPG and fantasy titles and who would rather get stuck into a more active scenario.

Can this be true?? An *Ultima* game that's... gasp!...even BETTER than *Ultima?!* Yup...ORIGIN have come up with another fantasia of graphics, gameplay and long-term addiction

The first category are missing out because the games have changed beyond all recognition. The second category are just missing out, period. Here's why...

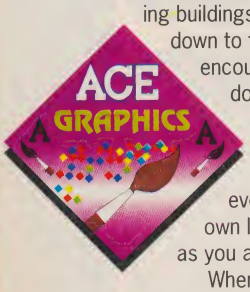
A quick glimpse of the intro – the end of a stunning slow scroll through the jungle! Welcome to the Savage Empire!

Aha! Lord British, you presume. The true sign of a great story-telling system is when the characters reappear in different roles with no hint of tedious deja vu. And that's what you've got here...

THE ELEMENTS

What do you get in a game like *Savage Empire*? First, you get the *Ultima VI* software engine. This gives you a scrolling map window of considerable graphic complexity, the ability to create and store game characters complete with their appearance and all statistics, a powerful icon-driven interface, and the capacity to process vast amounts of gameplay data. This engine can drive BIG games.

Gameplay consists of leading your 'party' (which may consist of between one and six members) around the landscape, entering buildings (displayed in high resolution right down to the cups on the tables) and encountering people much as you would do in real life. Unlike other games, these characters don't just sit there like parts of the furniture – under constant computer control every one of them is leading his/her own life and moving about the world just as you are.



When you encounter someone you can either ignore them, chat with them, or fight them. Again, these options are not just IGNORE, CHAT, FIGHT as they would be in some other games we could mention – these options are powerful and complex. If you communicate, the other person may well have a lot to say and highlighted words in the text prompt you with subjects for further discussion. Characters may set quests, offer information, simply pass the time of day, solve puzzles for you, or even join your party and place themselves entirely under your control. You can't afford to ignore anyone.

COMBAT

Sooner or later you're going to bump into someone (or something) you don't like, or who doesn't

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Here are just some of things to check out in *Savage Empire*:

- **Shamuru and Triolo**

A couple of friends with suspiciously familiar sounding names. Can these be Shamino and Iolo from Britannia?

- **Aiela**

A beautiful princess of the Kurak tribe. Yup, you're in love.

- **Toporu the Mad**

He lives on an island and thinks his mind is a little blue rock. What's he been taking?

- **Urali Swamplands**

There's a particularly unpleasant pet kept here by the Urali – a tyrannosaur. You have to get past him – and past the charming man-eating thingies in the lake

- **Yunapotli**

Yay! A robot! Just when we thought the whole world was swarming with nothing but dinosaurs, bloodthirsty tribesmen, and creepy crawlies, we get a real Tin Man. Put him together again and he may reveal the secrets of the Underground Empire that built him.

OTHER ULTIMAS

Since Origin seem to be THE software house around at the moment (*Wing Commander, Savage Empire*, and *Ultima VI* all in one year!), the question of format conversions is pretty important. Good news then, that Mindscape have established a European conversion team at the Origin headquarters specifically to cater for those of us the other side of the pond.

***Ultima V*, which we reported as a 950-rated Amiga update recently, was unfortunately delayed prior to final release but should be available as you read this. Amiga versions of *Ultima VI* and *Savage Empire* are under way – though the former needs to be finished before the latter can make much progress. CDTV and ST owners will not be neglected either – and expect more Ultima-type products for consoles too.**

Close to a window, the roof 'dissolves' and you can see inside – otherwise the interior remains a dark secret

Having a tussle with a Deinonychus. Methinks you and nouveau-lolo should get the hell out of there!

THE STORYLINE

If there's one thing the *Ultima* software engine is perfectly designed for, it's telling stories. *Ultima* had some pretty complex narrative lines and it's a tribute to the system that *Savage Empire* comes across as being a completely different game. The story, with this software, is everything...

In this game, you enter into a classic Conan Doyle (Lost World, Allan Quartermain – yeah, you remember them...you're not that young) style. There's initially some continuity with the *Ultima* series as you return from Britannia and meet up with a boffin who could help you unravel the secret of the moonstone you've returned with.

Oops! As plot would have it, there's a big bang and you find yourself with the Prof and a local journalist in a steaming jungle. A few yards away a doe-eyed beauty (that's Aiela), who you've been having exotic dreams about, is about to be gobbled up by something that looks distinctly pteranodonnish.

Naturally you save her tender bacon, but shortly after your hearthrob is (of course) snatched away by a positive brute of fellow called Darden the Huge. When you come to after your confrontation with the chappie, you find that your friends and your lover are gone...

You're then faced with miles of jungle, ancient civilisation, giant ants, lizardmen, underground cities, and other delights. Go forth, get killed, enjoy...

You've entered a hut and someone seems to have slaughtered a tiger. Time to fill your inventory (top right) by checking out the pile of objects in the corner

like you. In this case, you're into combat mode. Each of your party is directly under your control during fight sequences unless you have previously set their combat status to include default tactics. There are four default tactics settings for characters in Savage Empire: CHARGE (rushes in and attacks nearest enemy); RETREAT (cops out); RANGE (stay back and used ranged weapons); and COMMAND (under player's command at all times).

A bout ends either when you or your opponents manage to flee/leave the area or when one party is destroyed. During combat you manoeuvre your party individually, concentrating on selected opponents that you choose according to the particular strengths and weaknesses of your own characters. You get frequent reports telling you how badly (or how well) the opposition are taking it. If you've been put off in the past by the sort of RPG fight routines in, for example, *Bards Tale* then check out *Savage Empire* because the system is infinitely better.

EXPLORATION

Exploration, like combat and interaction, is another extended opportunity for those of you used to simply wandering about a sparse map and grabbing the objects that litter the landscape. In *Savage Empire* the locations are not only graphically superb but are also choc-a-bloc with detail.

Not only is there lots to check out, but the various objects and larger items can all be manipulated, investigated, traded, used, repositioned and so on.

IN PLAY

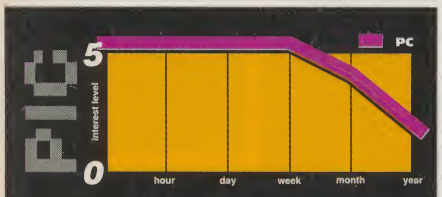
The incredible thing about *Savage Empire* is that, in play, it's even better than *Ultima*. I suspect this may be something of a subjective subject (!) but I'm certain that for most people the scenario of the game is going to be vastly more approachable than the normal fantasy RPG set-ups we've had in the past. Even games like Wasteland, which have had wider appeal, have lost out because the scenarios have been killed off by the impenetrable game play and RPG jargon. You don't get any of that in *Savage Empire* – you just get a rollicking good yarn and a very meaty game system.

As a dedicated *Ultima* fan, I have to admit that I'm pretty taken aback by *Savage Empire*. I'd imagined a rather pale imitation of the previous games but instead Origin have come up with a winner. Even the close-up scrolling map, which I didn't like as much in *UVI* as the small scale display in *UV*, works better in Savage Empire. That's anyone who knows their way round Britannia will constantly feel hampered by the narrow field of view in *UVI* and be wondering where they are. In *Savage Empire* it's a whole new world and the large scale simply brings the experience closer.

Somehow, I found fighting dinosaurs and natives a lot more interesting than struggling with supernatural gargoyles. There's also far more variety in the social structures of *Savage Empire* than there is in *Ultima*.

This is a winner. I'm going native.

● Steve Cooke



Even quicker to get into than *Ultima VI* because the scenario is – to non-Ultima fans – much more accessible. The controls are brilliantly simple given the complexity of the game and – provided you've got a mouse – the learning curve is nice and short. Once you're into the scenario the exploration element keeps interest high and even after that's waned the character development aspects will keep you playing for a very long time.

ACE RATING **955**

IBM PC

Superb 256 colour graphics if you've got the hardware. Sound boards are supported but don't expect anything beyond a barely enhanced peeping if you haven't got one. The system caters for those with limited disk space by offering you the choice between a condensed (but slower) file structure or a faster uncompacted one. Definitely better with a mouse – key controls take longer to learn.

RELEASE DETAILS

IBM PC	£34.99	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£TBA	TBA

No other versions planned at present

Isn't she dishy? The pteranodons certainly think so. You're own motives, of course, are entirely chivalrous

MARTIAN WORLD

Having seen how successful this reusing of the Ultima system has been, we were particularly pleased to hear that the next game in the *Worlds of Ultima* series should be available by next Easter. Called *Martian World*, it features a B-movie sci-fi scenario set on your favourite fantasy planet. Early reports say the storyline is excellent – stand by for more news in next month's ACE

Sullivan Bluth Presents

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Princess Daphne has been spirited away to a wrinkle in time by the evil wizard Mordroc who plans to force her into marriage. Only you, Dirk the Daring, can save her.

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The only new feature in the game. This little guy has a limited life span, but can get into all manner of places unreachable by any other means.

Boxes can be pushed into the water to create stepping stones, handy when crossing large tracts of water.

APPRENTICE

Rainbow Arts are looking for promotion – the hard way!

The story of *Apprentice* is one of woe, great loss and repressed ambition. You, being nothing more than a mere wizard's aide, have always wanted to become a grand master of magic. However, you are far too young. The wizards will let you try, but to prove your worth, you have to seek out a great dragon, and reclaim the book of secrets that he stole so long a go. The path is perilous, taking you over and under land and sea, as well as a short jaunt through hell for good measure.

Everybody and everything is against you in this game. Not a very nice thing to be told, but it's true. The wizards have decided to help you a little, by scattering packing crates about the place that can be kicked or thrown at the enemies. Some of them hide secret treasures, such as money or magical bonuses that allow you to float like a leaf, or create an animated controllable model of yourself.

Against you are all manner of nasties ranging from the very slow and simple hedgehogs to rampaging broomsticks that have a nasty habit of throwing your boxes back at you. There are also all kinds of traps laying about the place, collapsing platforms and water-filled holes to name but two. You've no way of telling where most of these are, so the game has to be learned.

Each of the thirty four levels is composed of large, four-way scrolling play areas viewed side on, a la *Super Mario Brothers*, At one end is the start location, at the other is the exit. There are a million and one different routes across the level, but the easiest one is marked with fruit. A helpful inclusion on the later levels, which really are nothing more than complicated mazes.

The controls are very well thought out indeed. Depending on which spells you've collected, the fire button plays a different role at different times. For example, if you are holding or stood next to a box, you'll either throw or kick it. However, if you are not in either of those categories and have collected some bombs, the button will place one directly in front of you.

Another nice gameplay feature is the ability to change direction while jumping. This allows you to adjust your trajectory in mid flight, changing the lengths and heights of your jumps and even looping backward. Handy in more than a few situations.

On the face of it, *Apprentice* doesn't break any barriers. Indeed, it may well get lost in the wash of console-style games – a breed this definitely fits right into – by being a little too ordinary. A fun game to play, but by no means an outstanding product.

● Tony Dillon

Attractive screen and music intro the game nicely, and to start with, things set off really well. The game plays well and there's enough of a challenge to keep you going. But not frantically or over enthusiastically. It's the game's complete lack of anything spectacular that marrs your excitement in the end, which is a shame because otherwise it's quite a nice product.

ACE RATING **685**

G IQ A FF

AMIGA

Commodore's pride and joy is worthy of a lot better than this. Granted the sprites are attractive – but not overly so – and the scrolling is very smooth. There are a few happy in-game tunes, but the sound FX are far too flat. The only part of the game that is remotely original is the little player that pops out of your trousers, and the novelty of that wears off not long after the crude jokes.

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£19.99	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£19.99	OUT NOW

No other versions planned

Collected money is spent, where else, in the shop. Here you can buy energy supplies, weapons and balloons, just like Woolworths!

The balloons can be used as lifts to higher platforms. You can't stay on them for long, though, as the air escapes pretty quickly

ACTION SET

... Faster than ever before!

FOR CHAMPIONS, SIMULATION AND ACTION ARE ALL THAT COUNT!

FULL BLAST

... do or die!

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and compatibles, COMMODORE 64.
NOTE! In the COMMODORE 64 version,
HIGHWAY PATROL and CHICAGO 90 are replaced by GRAND PRIX 500.

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BUCK ROGERS

COUNTDOWN TO DOOMSDAY

S.S.I. give you the chance to join Buck Rogers and the rebels of NEO in the struggle against RAM domination

The year is 2456 and humanity has colonised most of the solar system, terraforming the planets to suit his needs. Power lies with three international alliances, which – following the "The Last Gasp War" – have replaced national governments. Luna is owned by the Euro-Bloc faction, Venus by the Indo-Asian Consortium and Mars, seat of power among the inner worlds, by the despotic Russo-American Mercantile (RAM).

Earth, however, is in a bad way. Ruled for decades with cruel efficiency and an iron fist, mass pollution and war have taken their toll. In response, NEO [the New Earth Organisation] has been formed by a daring band of rebels to combat RAM's tyranny.

As fate and plot structure would have it, Buck Rogers is recovered alive from his frozen sleep and with his tactical genius and fearless daring he soon leads NEO to victory over RAM, who leave Earth after it becomes too expensive. Although NEO is now in control, RAM still attacks and, with a full invasion imminent, our heroes are desperate to build a defence force.

The game is in a similar vein to S.S.I.'s *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons*, *Buck Rogers* being the computer incarnation of TSR's role-playing game of the same name. The action starts with character generation. Each character has seven abilities (strength, dexterity, charisma etc) which are in turn modified by that character's racial characteristics. For example Martians (actually engineered earthlings for Mars) get a -1 modifier to their CON and STR values, but +1 to DEX and CHA. Other races include Terrans, Venusians, Mercurians, Tinkers and Desert Runners.

The next step is to pick a career class, the selection ranging from Rocketjocks to Engineers – all have minimum ability requirements and are open to only some of the races.

To personalise your character you allocate 80 skill points between various skills and advancement is achieved via the collection of experience points. Each time a character goes up a level you get an extra 40 points to add to any of his/her skills. With more than fifty to choose from you can create a varied party, ready for anything!

Combat occurs quite often and is fairly easy to get to grips with. Viewed from slightly above, you control colourful sprites which attack in a set order depending on initiative. This is a random value number modified by various factors including dexterity and surprise.

A varied arsenal is available although you start off with standard Bolt Guns, but as you progress you can upgrade to the likes of Laser Rifles and Plasma Throwers. Also possible is space combat. This too is controlled by a selection of menus, ramming being an option which can then be followed by boarding. To take a ship you must secure both the bridge and engineering sections. All booty is then yours and the team is credited with the salvage value. This account is used for ship repairs, fuel, and other necessities.

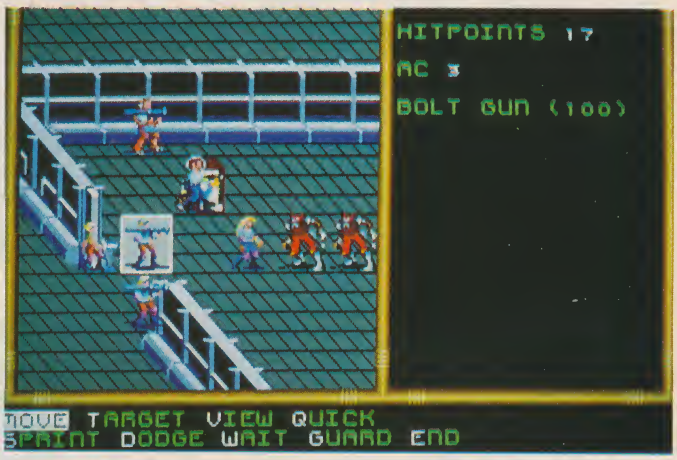
There are many locations ranging from Martian deserts to cavernous spaceships and all are inhabited in one form or another, some being hostile and others friendly. Control of your party's actions is via a series of menus with movement achieved by clicking the mouse on various parts of the 3D view.

All the views are clearly presented with good shading and colours that help build the atmosphere. Most of the major locations are introduced with some really impressive pictures that further give the feel of the 25th century. Sounds include the usual PC beeps and whines although soundboards are catered for .

No-one expects a computer to beat a human RPG GM, but Buck Rogers succeeds superbly in its own right and is an excellent addition to the genre.

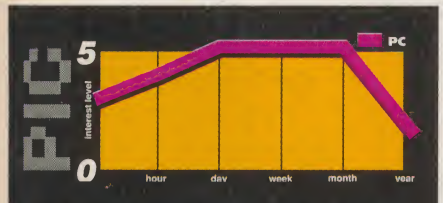
● Khalid Howladar

Upon entering a room you are attacked by the evil RAM Terrines....



...and a fierce fight ensues.

Just one of the numerous atmospheric screens



Heavy going to begin with, like all computer RPG's, but after creating your party rather than using the default one, you take more interest as your combination of skills begins to determine the gameplay. After a few hours you really get involved and are trying to do everything possible to get more experiance points, so you can handle the nastier enemies. Won't keep you playing until the 25th century, but should keep you busy well into 1991.

ACE RATING **885**

AMIGA

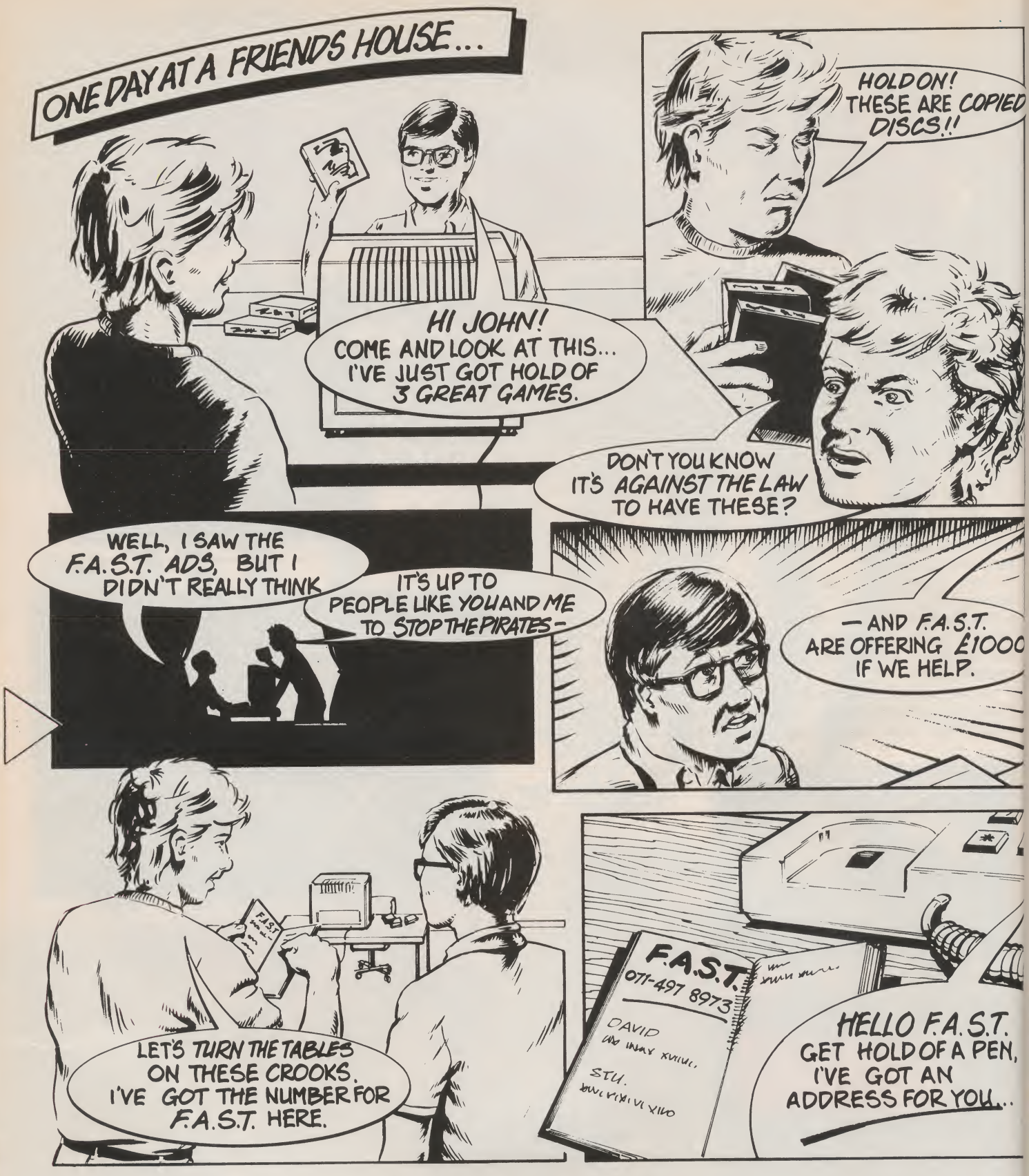
Most of the graphics are nicely done and some of the full screen pictures are excellent. That said, the combat graphics leave a lot to be desired with virtually no animation and in the odd cases some dire scenery. The game is well presented with a hefty box containing three disks, two manuals, and a Buck Rogers novel, which gets you more involved in the game.

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£XX.XX	XXXXXXX
AMIGA	£XX.XX	XXXXXXX

No other versions planned

Victorious! You strike a small blow against the despotic RAM.



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SimEarth

Get the Max

From the heart of Moraga in California, Maxis has produced some of the most original micro-computer software ever created. *SimCity*, the urban city simulation, and now *SimEarth* (can you manage a planet?) have taken the word 'micro-simulation' to a mass audience around the globe. Maxis products are now available on a variety of machines ranging from the Spectrum and Amiga to the FM Towns and Super Famicom. But how did it all begin? Jeff Braun, President of Maxis, explains:

"Maxis started in 1987, it's a partnership between Will Wright and myself. Before Maxis I was involved with productivity software on the Amiga but I just didn't see that going anywhere. I then met up with Will at a party. He'd already written *Raid on Bungeling Bay* (see panel for further details). Will designed all the graphics in *ROBB* and had a system set-up where he could just plop down factories and roads and build the islands you try to destroy in the game. While he was designing *Raid on Bungeling Bay* he decided it was more fun building the islands and cities than it was destroying them. This, coupled with the fact that his next-door neighbour just happened to be a knowledgeable urban-planner with a stack of computer-model data from his university days, lead to the neat idea of *SimCity*."

Will Wright, the creator of *SimCity*

"*SimCity* was finished in 1985 – it was originally called *Metropolis* on the C64 – but Will couldn't find a publisher, so we set-up Maxis and converted *SimCity* over to more adult-orientated machines like the Macintosh. *SimCity* is now available on the Spectrum, C64, CPC, Amiga, ST, PC, Macintosh, FM Towns, Sharp X68000 and NEC-9801. It will also be available on the Nintendo Entertainment System and Super Famicom in January 1991. [Nintendo has actually bought these licensing rights for a reputed one million pounds, though Jeff was unwilling to comment – ACE]. Before the Nintendo deal Maxis was just five people, now we've got over 35 people."

MAXIS

Where do you go after simulating the planet Earth? Rik Haynes talks to Maxis, the company that brought you *SimCity*, *SimEarth* and soon *SimCity2*...

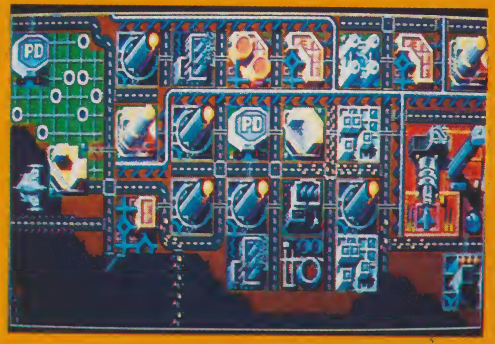
"The Super Famicom version of *SimCity* is being developed by the same team who created *Super Mario Bros. 3* - it's a beautiful product. The Super Famicom implementation will be the best version of *SimCity* with more 'gamey' features. It has animated ocean waves, a see-through menu-system, and gives user-defined names to objects in the cities like the ACE Suspension Bridge for example."

WILL THERE BE A FOLLOW-UP TO *SIMCITY*?

"As soon as *SimEarth* is finished, we're putting the same team on *SimCity2*. A lot of the features in *SimEarth* will appear in *SimCity2*. We'll have elevation – mountains and valleys. We're going to have a much bigger area and multiple cities, it will be almost like a county. We're not certain how these cities will interact yet, but we're talking about a multi-player ability, so you can be mayor in one city and your friend mayor in another. There will be some kind of conflicts where there's a county tax-rate, and one city might be industrialised and the other more commercial so there'll be some tradeoffs. The budget window's going to

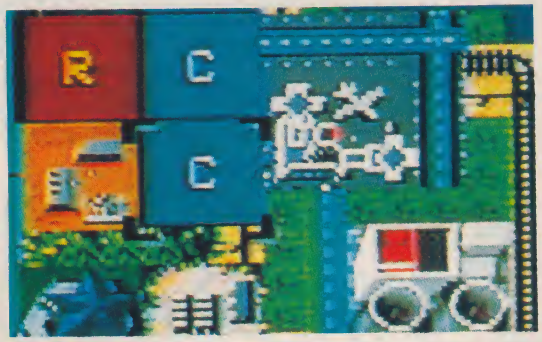
NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

Maxis is introducing two packages of *SimCity Graphics* as add-ons to the original *SimCity*. *Graphic Set 1 - Ancient Cities* gives you Ancient Asia, Medieval Times and the Wild West. *Graphic Set 2 - Future Cities* provides Future USA, Future Europe and Moon Colony. In addition to building your own cities, you can superimpose each of the six venues on *SimCity's* pre-built and play wacky combinations like Moon Colony San Francisco, Wild West Tokyo and Medieval Detroit. These data disks cost £19.99dk each and are available for the Amiga, ST, PC, Macintosh and FM Towns.



SimEarth

Super Famicom version of *SimCity*.



SimCity on the Super Famicom.

be much bigger. It won't be just three services – you'll have things like managing the sewers, water supply and waste disposal. There will be education and schools. We'll also have freeways, roads, rail, light rail and heavy rail – so there'll be a lot more transportation. We're going to add a lot more city services so that it's more realistic. We're going to have multiple-layers such as subway, sewer, city and high-rise levels to the city. You'll be able to zoom through levels of the terrain."

"*SimCity2* will be set through time, you'll see the city evolve. You can play it in any time-scale, you can start in medieval times and work your city all the way up to future times. The graphics will change over the years. We'll put in more detailed information about the city, we'll have more statistics."

"With *SimCity2* we've opened up the model so you have these toggles where you can change variables. For instance, you can change the relationships between land-value and crime, traffic density and population. You can go in and try your own rules. We're working on the specs now. *SimCity2* will be a completely different type of game to its predecessor. It should be ready sometime next year."

WILL YOU ENHANCE THE CDTV VERSION OF *SIMCITY2*?

"Yes, we'd like to include some hypercard-type stacks in the CDTV version to give you a lot more information about the product. We'd also like to have experts who analyse the city for you – you'd also be able to ask them questions. We might commission some famous urban planners. For example, if the crime-rate is high they might tell you how to help the city combat it. We're looking at a lot of different ideas of how we can fully exploit the CD-environment. Hopefully we'll have more graphics as well."

***SimCity* has been nominated as the Best Contribution to Urban Planing in the United States by the American Planning Association.**

Two mayors who were running for an election in a small town in America played *SimCity* for a night to see who would get the best score.

Maxis will be working with Bullfrog (the creators of *Populous* and *Powermonger*) in the future. You'll see something from them within the next year.

[Left] Jeff Braun (Maxis President), David Ward (boss of Ocean) and Gary Bracey (Ocean's teaboy).

The crazy guys at Maxis.

RAID ON BUNGELING BAY

The game that inspired Will Wright to create *SimCity* is a very playable 360° scrolling shoot'em-up. This mid-80's C64 title – released by Broderbund – also requires a fair degree of strategic thought. During the game you pilot a helicopter on a mission to stop The War Machine by destroying the production of its six war factories. These heavily defended buildings are scattered across islands spanning an area of 100 screens. You have five helicraft to accomplish your mission, each carries an unlimited supply of missiles and nine bombs. You can repair and reload with bombs at any time by landing on your carrier - which you must also defend against attack. The bombs can hit everything except airborne targets, while the missiles destroys everything except the battleship and factories. The battleship is built on one of the islands during the course of the game. You can delay its construction by bombing it, but once it's built the battleship will put out to sea and head for your carrier. It eventually attacks and sinks your carrier if you don't sink it first. If your carrier is sunk, then the helicopter you're flying becomes your last and you cannot repair damage. You can still reload by finding bombs located on some of the islands. Apart from the battleship, The War Machine has a formidable arsenal of tanks, boats, anti-aircaft guns, fighter planes and radar installations, and bombers. Tanks and boats supply the factories and increase the rate of production, anti-aircraft guns cause heavy damage and normally protect factories and radar-posts. The fighter planes will chase and fire at you until you lose or eliminate them. The radar installations on the ground aid the fighters in locating you. Bombers occasionally attack your carrier, when this happens you receive a warning message and a limited amount of time to return to the carrier and shoot the bombers down before they sink your carrier. If you destroy all six factories, you see a newspaper headline story describing your victory. *Raid on Bungeling Bay* is definitely an ACE Classic. If you see it, buy it. The game was one of the first licensed titles on the Nintendo Famicom console and sold over one million units in Japan.

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"...This is the best game I have ever played..." -Don Mattrick, President of Distinctive Software Inc

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POWERMONGER

Populous was billed by some as the ultimate God game – now ELECTRONIC ARTS step down from the dizzy heights of deity to wage war as a _Powermonger_

Previewed in issue 37, Powermonger may have been seen as the follow-up to the incredibly successful *Populous* - this is not the case. Programmed by Bullfrog, *Powermonger* is indeed a game of conquest and strategy, but places you in the role of an exiled warrior with twenty men under your command. You're out to establish yourself, having come ashore on strange and foreign (is)lands. To reach this somewhat formidable goal, you must successfully conquer each of the 195 areas that make up the world of *Powermonger*.

As you progress, the status of your leader (displayed as a large character behind the main play area) will vary according to the orders issued to each character under your control. As with *Populous*, each of these characters moves independently unless specifically commanded, although success inevitably depends upon certain orders being issued.

Unlike *Populous*, the range of controls does not extend to causing 'natural' disasters, revolving instead around husbandry (livestock, dependent plant-life), invention and the odd battle or two. Whilst earlier islands are relatively easily won by force, many inhabitants are less than prepared to submit, preferring to either trade, bribe or persuade in order to gain alliance - (which of these methods you should employ may be decided by spying on opponents to discover weaknesses or requirements) - for instance, other leaders may have advanced their weaponry and supplies beyond yours, when your own troops may be starving and inadequately armed.

You've just begun to establish yourself, and are waiting until your forces are strong enough...

Before attempting any destruction, you must commission and equip an army. Having done so, you may then select from 3 levels of aggression (or posture), pick your destination, launch your attack and observe the resulting battle. A defeated captain will be directly under your command and may subsequently lead an independent body of followers to further your regime, (although orders are sent via pigeon, so take some time to be carried out).

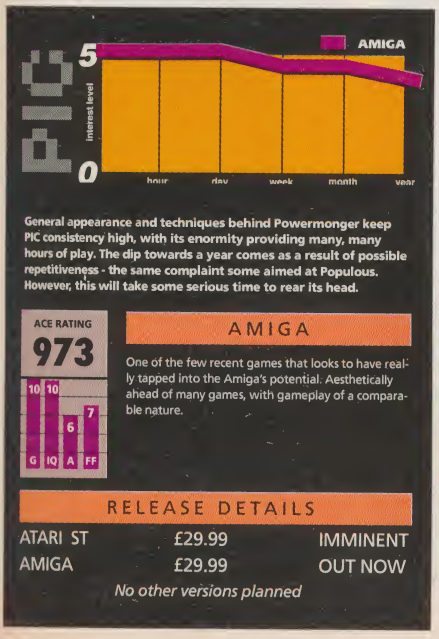
Physical opponents aside, continually changing weather may wildly alter your intended course of action, or even render plans completely useless, (try mounting an attack during the winter and watch the driving snow discourage your armies to the point of desertion!) and coupled with various geographical structures, often pose considerable problems. For example, any attempt to attack from either an open plain or the top of a hill will see your chances of success decrease, as the enemy will have observed your intentions and preplanned defences. Alternatively, attacking from the cover of a forest or the brow of a hill increases your chances of success due to your having the element of surprise!

... to strike! Hack! (the Herald Angels sing!) Laying waste to a settlement and sending souls skyward

The complexity involved in producing the fully manipulable polygon landscapes that make up *Powermonger*'s 195 areas, must be regarded as an achievement. The zoom and rotate facilities are not only excellently implemented, but add an extra twist, allowing full views of each game aspect, geographical and otherwise. Icon control is easily learned, although mastering the game itself will take considerably longer. Graphically, *Powermonger* is in a class of its own. Not only are there thousands of independent characters (all well designed), but elemental disruptions and dozens of land formations combine to provide variety and maintain interest. Colour is appropriately used to enhance realistic scenery. Sound is both realistic and informative and nearby activities may be recognised aurally, so influencing a player's actions.

A sublime example of the art of computer gaming, and an essential purchase.

● Alex Ruranski



Information may be gleaned about anything within the game. This guy in particular follows a rival - time to wage war...

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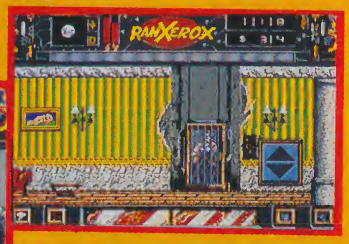
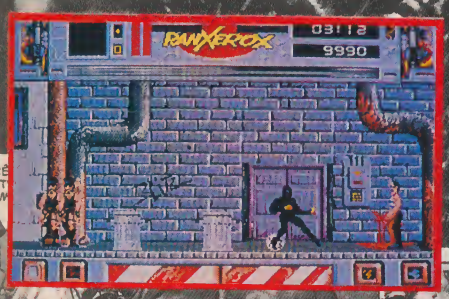


From Rome to New York, psycho-plague is taking its victims. The President of the United States, himself, is contaminated. You are Ranx, an android with muscles of steel, and only you can save the world. But, you are being tortured by something even worse. Your friend, Lubna, has disappeared and you want to find her at all costs.



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THE IMMORTAL

EA prove that sometimes dead is better

If I were to tell you that Will Harvey's (author of *Zany Golf* and *The Music Construction Set*) latest, *The Immortal*, was a top quality arcade adventure, you'd probably be very interested. If I were to tell you that it had, in the words of the guy who wrote the packaging blurb "movie-quality animations", no doubt your palms would sweat a fair bit. If I finally followed up by telling you that it only has around 50 locations, your enthusiasm would no doubt collapse in a sobbing heap. But if to you hardened gamesters out there, 50 screens seems like a pitifully small amount, let me tell you that this is no easy ride.

The plot is a standard one of goblins, underground mazes, rescue and magic scrolls. The game itself, however, is anything but standard. In terms of gameplay, design and presentation, *The Immortal* is in a class of its own.

You are a wizard on a quest to find and rescue your teacher and master, the Grand Wizard Mordamir. The underground complex you have to travel through contains eight levels full of Goblins, Trolls, secret traps and all manner of puzzles, presented in isometric format. You begin the game totally unarmed magically, with only your wizard's staff for protection.

As you traverse, you find an assortment of items, be they locked away in chests, lying on the floor or hidden on the bodies of your enemies, only reclaimable when they lie dead. Even though some items may seem a little pointless, such as the bottle of water, every item in the game has a use. The key to progressing is working out what to use and where.

The lack of an intro screen was a little discouraging, but as soon as I begun the game, I realised why they didn't want to waste any disk space on something as minor as an attract screen. It seems as if every spare byte has gone into the graphics in the game. If ever a game could be said to have truly realistic animation, this is the one. Every movement made with in the game by anything has been finely calculated to look as perfect as possible, right down to the swing of the wizard's robes and the glitter of the jewels.

In terms of the design of the game, Will Harvey and his band of merry men must have sweated blood. Every room poses a new problem, from following a secret path throug a room laced with traps, to enticing some Will-O-The-Wisp to follow you into combat. All in all, you've got a game that lead you well into the early hours of next week.

● Tony Dill

A warrior lies slain: and so will you if you don't watch your back!

The inventory screen. Selecting an item will either use it or drop it

One of the many intricate puzzles: the beam of light has been directed to the gem...but how?

One of the more endearing characters. Here, you have to try to persuade him to give you his gem

PIC

The glorious screenshots on the back of the packaging easily cover for the lack of an intro screen, and your anticipation is well rewarded upon loading. The game starts tough and gets tougher, but is never frustrating. You learn a bit more each time you play, so you don't mind constantly restarting. The only problem is that as soon as you've finished the game, there is no incentive to play again.

ACE RATING **910**

10 8 8 5 G IQ A FF

ATARI ST

If I said the graphics were anything other than marvellous, I'd obviously need my head examining. Realistic and smooth, they only suffer in being a little too slow. The sound is a little lax in places, but is more than made up for by an already highly atmospheric game. A lasting product, and if it doesn't appeal to you, then you're probably brain dead.

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£24.99	OUTNOW
AMIGA	£24.99	IMMINENT

No other versions planned

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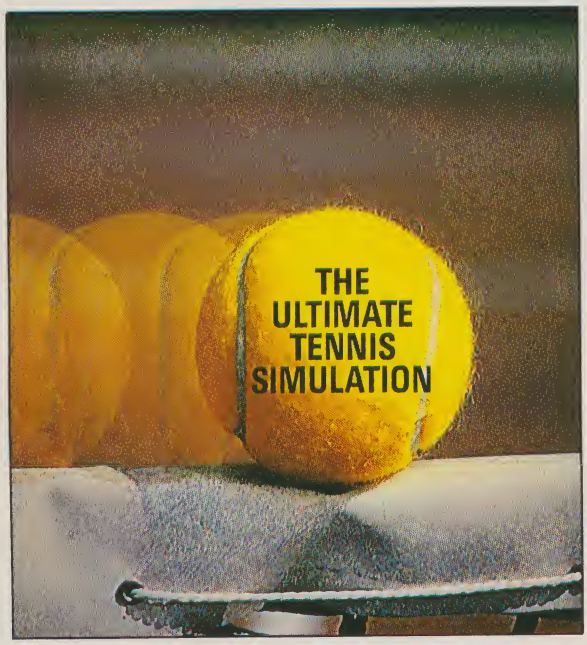

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ASA

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What have biplanes, German U-Boats and American B-52 Bombers have in-common?

THREE-SIXTY

BLUE MAX

Three-Sixty Pacific, Inc is the American software developer responsible for the ACE-Rated *Harpoon* naval strategy game. Now this Californian-based company is working on simulations of WWI planes, WWII submarines and WWIII bombers. Now that's a lot of WWs!

ACES OF THE GREAT WAR

"How good are your nerves at 2000ft with an armed Fokker DR.I on your tail? Forget glory... think survival," says '360'. *Blue Max, Aces of the Great War*, attempts to recreate the excitement and challenge of air-to-air combat over France during 1917.

You have the choice of flying one of eight classic bi- and tri-plane fighters from 'The War To End All Wars'. This realistic solid-3D flight-simulation is packed with features, including user-defined

BLUE MAX

weather conditions, two-player head-to-head play options, instant replay, and multiple historically-accurate missions.

Blue Max is to be released this month on PC for £34.99dk – this version fully supports 256-colour VGA graphics and AdLib, Covox and Game Blaster soundboards. The game even features the soundtrack from the original George Peppard movie. Versions for the Amiga and ST will follow later this year.

MEGAFORTRESS

DAS BOOT

This German U-Boat simulation is based around the accounts of Peter Cremer, one of the three surviving U-Boat captains from World War Two, and technical source from the sensitive and absorbing TV mini-series.

"Sound, music and historical perspective combine to make this an intense and action packed simulation," explains Three-Sixty. *Das Boot* incorporates missions in the Arctic, Norway, Gibraltar, Bay of Biscay and the North Atlantic as you attack sea-, land- and air-based targets and avoid mine fields and depth charges.

BLUE MAX

Like the other games mentioned here, *Das Boot* is out now on PC (£34.99dk) with Amiga and ST versions available soon. "Scenes of confrontation between the sub and its enemies on the surface and in the air are vividly displayed in 256-colour VGA graphics and a full 3D world with multiple camera angles," states Three-Sixty.

Das Boot is basically an underwater version of Accolade's *Ace of Aces* flight-sim... which is hardly surprising as Tom Frisina, the boss of Three-Sixty, also happens to be the ex-President of Accolade.

FLIGHT OF THE OLD DOG

Based around the best-selling (but typically gung-ho) American novel, *Flight of the Old Dog* by Dale Brown, *MegaFortress* features a vintage American B-52 Bomber modified and armed with state-of-the-art weapons and avionics, a satin black finish for stealth avoidance, and go-faster stripes. This 'turbo-nutter' B-52 flies just 200ft off the ground at a hectic 600MPH, and is apparently capable of attacking any target in the world regardless of its location and amount of defences.

MegaFortress is a sophisticated flight-simulation available for PC (£34.99dk), and coming soon on ST and Amiga. During the game you take-on the roles and views of the pilot, navigator, weapons officer, communications officer and electronic countermeasures officer. You have to attack a heavily-defended target on the Kamchatka Peninsula while warding off Soviet MiG-29 and SU27 fighters.

"You must employ planning, strategy and the ability to handle tremendous pressure under fire," reveals Three-Sixty.

Author Dale Brown actually collaborated with Three-Sixty's developers to produce the game. Brown was originally a U.S. Air Force Captain and participated in numerous top-secret tests and exercises for Strategic Air Command, including the Red Flag tactical combat exercise at Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada where he took his FB-111 bomber over the speed of sound at tree-top level to escape 'enemy' fighters and ground-to-air threats.

● Rik Haynes

DAS BOOT

DAS BOOT

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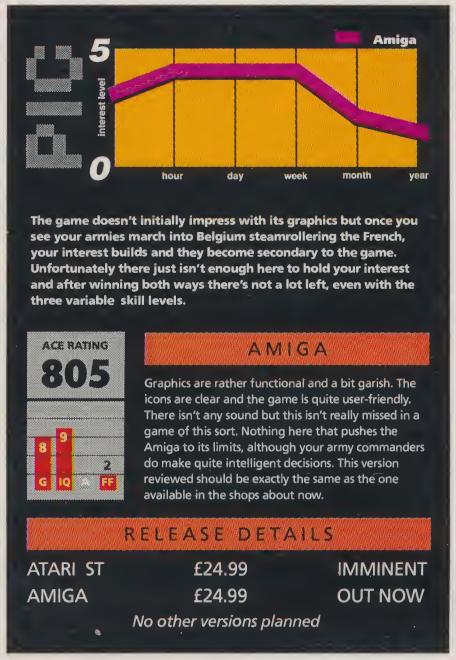
BLITZKRIEG MAY 1940

IMPRESSIONS put history in your hands

The display fully zoomed out. You can zoom in for more detail on any section



On May 10th 1940 the German army launched its attack against the Low Countries and France. The plan was to trick the Allies into defending Belgium while the main weight of the German Army stormed through the Ardennes, crossed the Meuse and then struck out for the Channel. This would split the the Allied army and cut its northern forces off.

The plan was largely successful and within a week the Allies had to retreat. The British Expeditionary Force decided to withdraw from Dunkirk on the 25th May and, by June 14th, Paris was in Hitler's hands.

The main reason for this success was due to the speed at which the German forces moved and the name 'Blitzkrieg' ('lightning war') was given to this form of mechanised warfare. In 1990, however, you get a second chance as Impressions put history in your hands and offer you the opportunity to send Adolf packing (in the *May 1940* section) or to repeat his success (in the *Blitzkrieg* section).

Almost all of the game is played via a large four-way scrolling map showing France and the Low Countries. Also displayed are the major rivers and roads. Your armies take the form of square icons representing the units available to you. Different colours distinguish each of your armies which include Armour (tanks and other armoured vehicles), Artillery and Infantry, and finally Motorised Infantry (Vehicle transportation).

Each army has a percentage rating which determines its ability in combat. These ratings are altered depending on the unit type and terrain in which the battle is fought. Should a unit's rating fall below 45% it will be disbanded and combined with other units in the same army.

Terrain also effects movement, with each type costing a set amount of points. Armour, for example, has twelve points at its disposal, while Infantry on the other hand has only six.

Troop movements shown in close-up. No *UMS* style topographical displays here...

The game can be played entirely by the mouse or keyboard depending on your preference and can be set at one of three levels. A number of facilities are available each turn. Issuing orders are the most important, here you can find out the status of all units in the army, current objectives and also current orders.

Also present are the Strategic Movement and Reserve options where you can resupply units and raise morale, along with sending support to armies with less than six units.

The units themselves can be varied in a number of different ways. For example, each army has three order settings, these being Attack, Defend and Discretion. Although not actually direct orders, these strongly influence the commander's decisions. Every so often a commander will make some comments, giving you some advice or informing you of his supply requirements, expecting you to organise reinforcements. Supplies depend on routes being available, with the type determining the amount getting through.

Combat is achieved by being adjacent to the opposing unit and damage is shown with a number depicting its new rating. Along with the factors mentioned above, Morale also plays a key part, raising effectiveness by up to 30%.

Graphics are functional and serve their purpose well, being both clear and logical, although they could have been made a bit more presentable with a better use of colour.

Blitzkrieg May 1940 is a good effort on the part of Impressions and, unlike some modern wargames, is very easy to get into. That makes it suitable for novice wargamers who fancy a spot of strategy without having any desire to don tin helmets and dig trenches in the front garden. For a dedicated soldier, however, the scenario and its implementation are too limited and, even though there are different skill levels, there just isn't enough variety to detain you at the Front.

● **Khalid Howladar**

ENTER FIRST INTO BATTLE... LAST TO LEAVE

ATARI ST
CBM AMIGA
IBM PC &
COMPATIBLES

Set in the near future, as an alternative reality, BATTLE COMMAND is an arcade/strategy game in which the player controls a single "MAULER" Assault Tank in one of 16 scenarios (missions) in the ultra war, fought between two dominant races in the NEW WORLD. The latest phase of the North/South war has been going on for over 10 years, with a stalemate eventually developing - a standoff between armies massed over a long dug-in battlefront. Such are the defensive capabilities of each side, full scale attacks are suicidal, so any offensive moves are, by necessity, small "behind the lines" actions performed by elite troops in specially designed vehicles. The Mauler is the latest such machine - capable of being lifted in and out of hostile territory by fast stealth choppers and armed with the most advanced weaponry the Northern scientists can devise.

ocean

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VOODOO NIGHTMARE

Your girlfriend's left you and run off with your best friend. A witch doctor has put a hex on you. And you're stuck in the middle of the jungle. Thank PALACE.

Deep in the jungle, hunting for a temple Watch out for the holes in the bridge

Voodoo Nightmare is Zippo Games' final foray into the home computer market, sadly. From now on the authors behind such classics as *Cosmic Pirate* will be console only. So I loaded their farewell product with only one thought – will they go out with a bang or a squirt?

A huge 3D-isometric maze, cleverly disguised as a jungle, sets the scene as you search for five temples and the help of the five different gods who inhabit them in your struggle against a hex-dealing witch doctor. The jungle is over 500 screens large and also includes shops (for buying extra weapons such as knives and torches) and casinos, where you can increase your money (or fruit, as it is more commonly known).

Each temple follows the same lines: a small (only 50 screens!) maze of rooms filled with diamonds. The idea is to collect all the diamonds in the temple and bring them to the temple god. If you have collected all the gems, the god will present you with a pin with which to impale your voodoo doctor doll and a special power which you'll need later on in the game. To leave the temple, you need all the gems and some are in hidden rooms that can only be opened by killing certain creatures or by moving certain objects around, bringing a slight puzzle element into the game.

Once you have completed all five temples, you have to complete three special missions in the jungle itself, such as rescuing a lion cub, for the last of the eight pins. You then face the witch doctor himself in his massive underground hideaway – even larger than the jungle!

ISOTONIC CONTROLS?

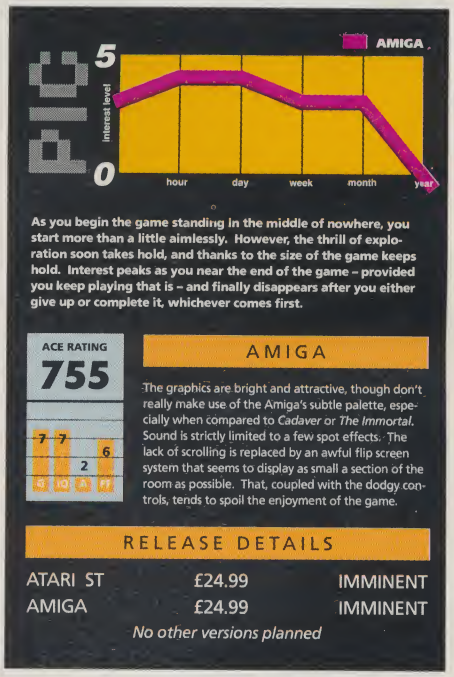
The controls are definitely the game's weakest point. As with any isometric game, all the joystick directions have been rotated by 45 degrees with the fire button performing a standard attack procedure (If you have a weapon, you'll use it – otherwise you'll jump). For example, pulling down on the joystick makes your on-screen persona walk in a down-right diagonal. The problem is that, responsive though the controls are, the character moves far too quickly to be finely controlled, meaning that in times where precise control is necessary (e.g. trying to kill a spider by jumping on it) you end up racing around in uncontrollable circles. With practise you can get used to them, but mastering them is another matter.

Voodoo Nightmare is a well designed product, with an interesting storyline. I'm not too sure how to take the size of the game, though. On one hand, it is a huge challenge, and one I'm sure would be rewarding to beat. However on the other , it does look like it could become dull halfway through. Maybe a little more variety next time? Oh, sorry I forgot. There won't be a next time.

● Tony Dillon

MANUAL DEXTERITY

In a desperate bid to beat Origin at their own game of designing unusual manuals, Palace have rehashed the style of the old Rupert The Bear books to tell the story of the game. Artwork and text from Lorne Campbell and Simon Birrell adorn a book based around a primitive comic system, with two frames on each page and a short poem under each. Sounds ripe for bed time reading. Here's a little taster:
"Boots Barker, his wife and best friend,
Over the Congo one weekend
Thrown to his death, can Boots be saved?
I fear Boots' wife has misbehaved!"



As you begin the game standing in the middle of nowhere, you start more than a little aimlessly. However, the thrill of exploration soon takes hold, and thanks to the size of the game keeps hold. Interest peaks as you near the end of the game – provided you keep playing that is – and finally disappears after you either give up or complete it, whichever comes first.

ACE RATING **755**

AMIGA

The graphics are bright and attractive, though don't really make use of the Amiga's subtle palette, especially when compared to *Cadaver* or *The Immortal*. Sound is strictly limited to a few spot effects. The lack of scrolling is replaced by an awful flip screen system that seems to display as small a section of the room as possible. That, coupled with the dodgy controls, tends to spoil the enjoyment of the game.

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£24.99	IMMINENT
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No other versions planned

A typical room in the spider temple. The circles on the floor are teleporters that take you to other parts of the room.

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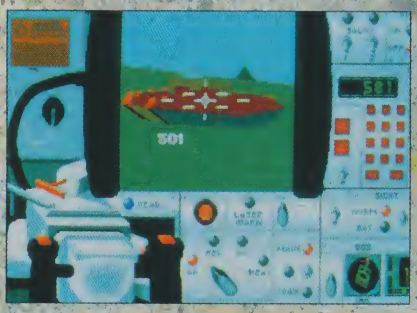

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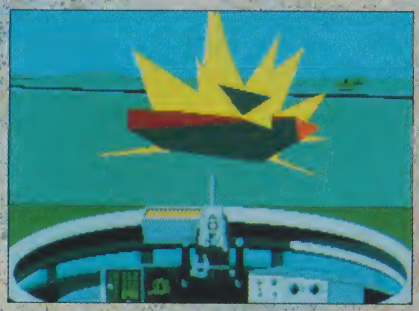
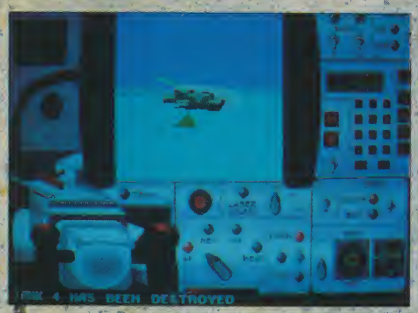


▪ **Endless variety.** Fight during the day, at night, in snow, mud, rain or clear weather. With thousands of battlefields and millions of situations and you get endless enjoyment. Decide between single battles or an entire campaign.



IBM SCREEN SHOTS SHOWN. ACTUAL SHOTS MAY VARY

M1 Tank Platoon was released for IBM PC compatible machines in October 1989;

"MicroProse has surely excelled on this one: it's all there, from superb playability through great attention to detail to one of the best manuals I've seen in a long time. The competition should watch out, as this one's going to take some beating." *** PC Leisure Spring '90**

" I can't really fault M1 Tank Platoon as it's definitely MicroProse's most comprehensive simulation yet." 87% C&VG Nov '89

"The most frighteningly accurate tank sim we've seen." 926 Ace Dec '89

WING COMMANDER

Wing Commander contains a wide variety of viewpoints from both inside and outside your fighter including: Chase Plane view which puts the camera directly behind your ship (you can choose how close to be), Battle view displays a long-distance view of an entire battle, Tactical view always keeps you and the ship you've targeted (or the most significant threat) in view, Missile view gives you a missile's eye view of the action, and Tailing views which positions the camera behind any ship in the area.

TRADE SECRETS

Thrust out and kick in full afterburners with this ORIGIN/MINDSCAPE epic...

Wing Commander took 77 person months to be developed. Chris Roberts plus four other programmers provided the revolutionary graphics code found in the game, while four graphic artists designed the ray-traced and bitmapped screens and sprites. Audio was supplied by two composers and one sound-effects specialist, and three writers developed the gameplay scenario. The absolute minimum time to complete the game – if you don't screw up – is eight hours solid playing. *Wing Commander* can be played as a straight-forward shoot'em-up or advanced space flight-simulation. It's a sort of cross between Sega's *Galaxy Force II* coin-op and a classic 8-bit Atari game called *Star Raiders*. "You can develop your own style and tactics in *Wing Commander*," says Chris Roberts – the ex-Brit creator of the world's first cinematic space combat simulator. But he confides: "I prefer to fly by the seat of my pants". Afterburners are the key to successfully flying the four spacecraft found in *Wing Commander*. You must master this function to get good firing positions against enemy ships. In fact, they're the the only way to survive later on in the game.

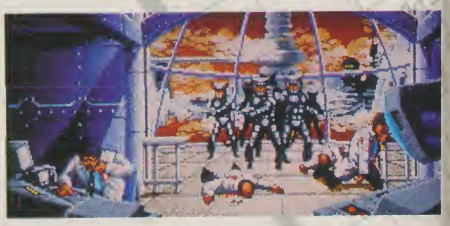
In the barracks. The sleeping pilots in the bunks represent saved games, you can also quit by going through the airlock at the rear. Note the attention to detail: the bucket next to the bottom right bunk is soaking up water leaking from the pipe above, a broken fluorescent light sporadically blinks, pictures of near-naked girls hang on the lockers.

Roberts moved to Austin, Texas in the States after programming the BBC computer versions of Ocean's *Match Day* and *Stryker's Run* for Superior Software. Shortly after arriving in this busy Texan town, Roberts started to work for Origin – the leading American software company responsible for the hugely popular Ultima series of role-playing games – who just happened to be based just around the corner. Roberts has written *Times of Lore*, *Bad Blood* and now *Wing Commander* for Origin.

"I wanted to create a game with the movie-like effects seen in *Battlestar Galactica* and *Star Wars*," states Roberts. "I thought it would be neat to play around with military hardware while also developing the characters personalities in the game."

Roberts is currently putting the finishing touches to an add-on disk for *Wing Commander* featuring 12 missions and a plot to find a new Kilrathi Dreadnought after it butchers one of your outer colonies. In the longer term, he will soon start work on ***Wing Commander II*** which will include such extra goodies as user-defined weapon selection, more complex personalities, camera replay function, greater variety of spacecraft to fly including bombers and different bases. "I want to make it even more like a movie," confirms Roberts. *Wing Commander II* should be released by the summer of 1991.

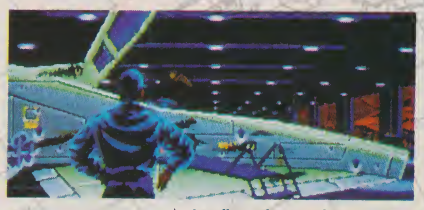
● Rik Haynes



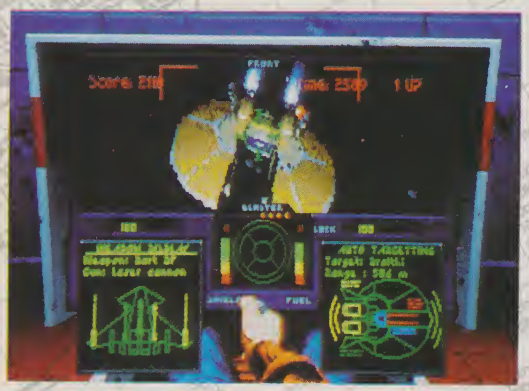
This 'Meanwhile' sequence is another example of *Wing Commanders* film-like presentation. Animated mini-movies show the progress of the war throughout the galaxy. Here Kilrathi soldiers attack the Terran Research Colony on McRuliffe VI and mercilessly kill all your scientists.

Back to the safety of homebase... the TCS Tiger's Claw. You must accomplished one of the following before you can land: traveled to any Nav point, achieved any mission objective or killed at least one enemy ship.

The bar is the favourite gathering spot for the crew of the Tiger's Claw. You can even talk to people – you always find the bartender and , usually, one or two pilots in the bar. Talk with everyone you can – you never know who will have clues and information helpful to you.



Landing takes you back to the hangar, where you can see what damage your ship has sustained. From the hangar, you go to a debriefing where your performance during the mission is evaluated, and every significant mission or achievement is noted by Colonel Halcyon.



Playing the TrainSim in the Tiger's Claw bar. Select this video game/training simulator and you're presented with the current hiscores and a selection of Kilrathi enemy spacecraft to fight. The TrainSim unit is a safe, painless opportunity to learn the basics of flying and combat. Certain game functions such as navigation and communications are disabled in the TrainSim.

Another dramatic sequence of multi-coloured explosions and floating debris...

Game over! Each campaign in *Wing Commander* has its own plot and conclusion. Each series of missions you fly – and whether or not you're victorious – affects the Confederation's chances for ultimate victory in Vega Sector. After several missions, you're presented with Campaign Progress Screens, story updates which describe what's happening in the war. Do badly, and the forces of the Terran Confederation take a beating. Do well, and Terran forces prevail. Do very well, and you may be responsible for Confederation victory in the Vega Sector.

You can communicate with any spacecraft in your vicinity – including the enemy. The Communications system intelligently determines who is eligible to receive a message from you and what messages you can send. Wingpeople sometimes disobey but you can give them orders like Break and Attack, Keep Formation and Return to Base. If you activate Communications when you have an enemy ship targeted and a menu of taunts appear. Taunts sometimes attack enemy ships to you, drawing fire away from a ship you're protecting, or perhaps, saving a wingperson whose ship has been damaged.

LEFT VDU *displays a profile of your fighter, showing your ship's status. You can cycle through screens displaying damage your ship has taken. You can also change your ship's active gun and weapon delivery system .*

BLASTER INDICATOR *shows the power level of your ship's active gun. Frequent use of the gun runs down your blaster power. Your guns will not fire if you have no blaster power. Guns recover power gradually, and recovery is slowed if your shields are also regenerating.*

RADAR DISPLAY *(Flashes in appropriate quadrant when ship is hit)*

EJECT WARNING *flashes if your ship has sustained significant damage. When the eject warning starts flashing, you must decide how serious the situation is and whether to eject or not.*

RIGHT VDU *is a multi-function display allowing you to display Targeting (which indicates the status of the ship you're currently targeting), Range data and Communications (shows both your communications options and incoming video from other ships).*

One of the four spacecraft you fly in *Wing Commander*. This Raptor heavy fighter is armed with 2 Neutron Guns, 2 Gatling Mass Driver Cannon, 2 Heat-Seeking Missiles, 2 Spiculum IR (Image Recognition) Missiles, a Pilum FF (Friend or Foe) Missile and Porcupine Space Mine.

What does it feel like to play a movie? The moment you load-up *Wing Commander*, you know you're playing something special. State of the art graphics, sound and presentation are supported by playable and additive gameplay. This cinematic combat-sim won't keep you hooked for months, but this doesn't detract from the fact that *Wing Commander* is a game in a class all it's own. Origin could become *the* software house of the decade.

ACE RATING
949

10 10 10
4
G IQ A FF

IBM PC

This is the first time graphics and sound of this quality have been found outside the arcades. Want to play *Wing Commander* in the best possible way? You need:: 12MHz 286 PC (at least), VGA graphics card, Roland MT-32 sound-board, 540K expanded memory (full music, disk caching and RAM/EMS graphics – see your pilot's hand move, cockpit sparks, hyperspace warp flash, large explosions), hard disc and joystick.

RELEASE DETAILS

IBM PC	£34.99dk	OUT NOW
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No other versions planned

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IBM PC (EGA) Screenshots

DOMARK

GREMLINS 2

The start of level 2. That green blob is a gremlin on a skateboard

ELITE fed them after midnight!

Gremlins 2, the movie, received a mixed bag of reviews. Some loved it and some hated it, so Elite took a bit of a risk in signing a license that could never be described as a 'sure-fire hit'. Sad to say, it seems to have been a gamble that hasn't paid off.

The game is based around five scenes from the film, with each level following along basically the same lines. You travel from left to right along the flip-screen level shooting the gremlins that appear randomly throughout with your trusty torch, or any other weapons that lie about waiting to be collected (including frisbees and telephone receivers!?!). At the end of each level there is a lift, which will only open if you have collected a special item (marked with a yellow G) hidden somewhere on the level.

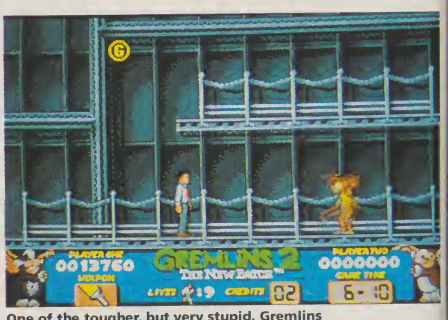
Visually, the game looks like nothing more than a standard ST game – garish colours and poorly masked sprites. Each screen is composed of myriads of platforms disguised (badly) as items of furniture. Bonus items, such as weapons, extra lives and extra time (yes, it's a race against the clock) are dotted at various heights, and it takes planning to get into positions where you can reach them, as well as incredible reflexes to avoid the randomly appearing gremlins.

Here lies the problem. Put very simply, gremlins appear randomly on screen and move quickly. You hot on the trot too, but the joystick response is appalling. Gremlins can appear from either side of the screen at any time – even as you are about to walk off – and (surprise) contact kills – with unjustifiable regularity.

Even more annoying is an interesting little glitch based around a character called Shocker, who pokes out of electricity sockets and fires bolts of energy at you. He has a tendency to hang around the edges of the screen – no problem, but when you die, you are placed at the edge of the screen you died on. Therefore, dear reader, if Shocker zaps you at the edge of the screen, the game is almost certainly over. Since this little number crops up on Level 4, a certain amount of hair pulling is likely to ensue.

Without these playability problems, *Gremlins 2* could have been a really good game. Unfortunately, it's...well...pretty evil.

● Tony Dillon



One of the tougher, but very stupid, Gremlins

Kill this guy quickly before he leaps at you!

The end of level one – and you've got the first item

THE ULTIMATE

Ride

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Tame your dream machine in the Ultimate bike racing challenge-The Ultimate Ride brings two wheeled action hurtling into your living room at its raw, nerve tingling best.

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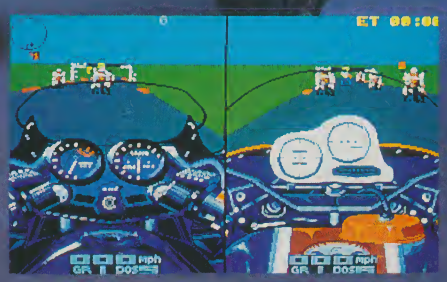
The Ultimate Ride even lets you design your own course using the unique Artificial Intelligence track editor. Challenge a friend on the simultaneous two player option or create custom disks of your favourite track and bike.

The Ultimate Ride combines ultra fast road racing graphics with unequalled presentation and animation- This is a real interactive racing movie.

Can you take the power?

MINDSCAPE

Actual screen shots



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COVERT ACTION

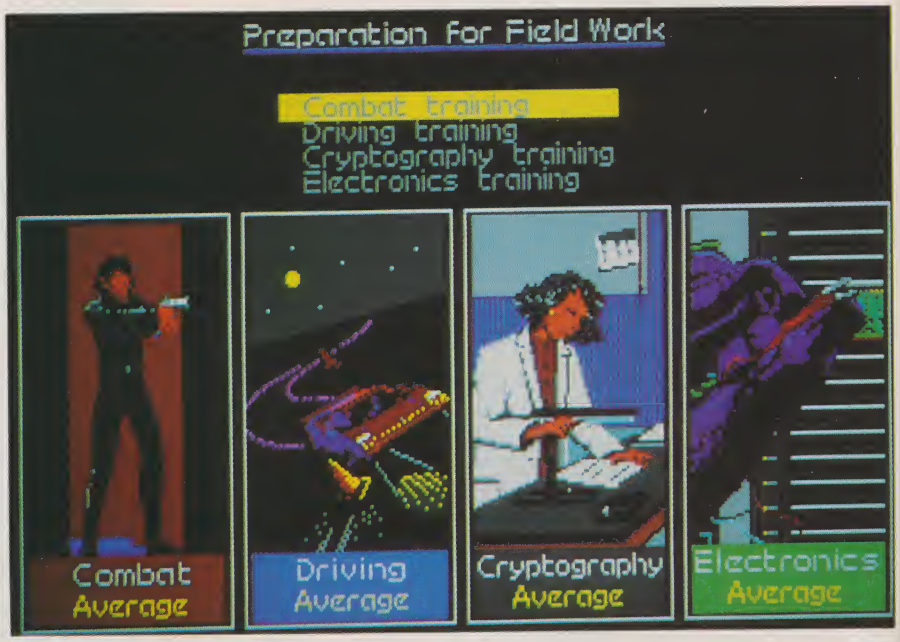
Microprose involved in undercover espionage shock!

Well known for titles of truly monolithic proportions, Microprose has come forth with another in the range of these epic games, the strategy orientated *Covert Action*, in which you play the ultimate secret agent known as Max Remington. Dissatisfied by the confines of CIA training, Remington decided to go it alone in the World of undercover investigation - at which he excelled. Now, having worked for nearly every western Government, Remington is rumoured to take on only those cases he finds personally intriguing – the one exception to which is said to be those asked of him personally by the U.S. President.

Upon loading, the game runs through a short intro sequence after which you are presented with three options enabling you to either create or load a new or saved character, or to practice a skill. It's vital to familiarise yourself with the important areas of gameplay. These areas comprise of combat, driving, cryptography and electronics.

Combat is generally coupled with break-ins, whereby you must first select a point of entry. It relies initially on arming yourself adequately, depending upon the tension of the situation you are entering. Equipment includes a hand/machine gun, body armour, grenades, a motion detector and camera. Once inside the building, you will be shown a large plan display of the room and its contents through which you are free to rummage. It is advisable that the camera is taken, in addition to available bugging devices, should the room prove fruitful. A smaller display to the right includes the area immediately outside where any additional activity (like approaching guards) is shown, and a figure showing depleting resources. Combat itself is only engaged if your unscrupulous activities are discovered by others – whereupon a swift hail of bullets drops them like flies. In addition to physical combat, Remington may set booby-traps, achieved by placing a grenade in a strategic position whereby enemy movement will detonate it.

The second of the major skills, (driving) involves pursuit of a suspect through the city streets – having first chosen from four possible



The vital skills in which you must be trained.

Hail to the chief – the Pres briefs our agent.

FROM MICHIGAN TO MICROPROSE

Sid Meier, mainman behind *Covert Action* is rather more than 'just' a programmer. ACE now presents a compact biography on the man... As a child, Sid held a fascination with history, science and game design. In 1976 he graduated from the University of Michigan with a degree in computer science. Following his graduation, Meier began programming mini-computers for General Instruments Corporation, Business Systems Division. In 1980, Meier purchased an Atari 800 as he felt its graphic capabilities were well-suited to the games he so enjoyed. Later that year, he set up an Atari user group. Having played an aerial combat game in an arcade, Sid felt he could add more realism with software specifically designed for home computers. Sid entitled his creation *HELLCAT ACE* and from this, Microprose Software emerged. Sid's ideas that software should continually challenge the player, whether beginner or expert, were at the forefront then as they are now, acknowledged by such Microprose releases as *F-19 Stealth Fighter*, *Railroad Tycoon*, *Silent Service (I and II)* and *M1 Tank Platoon*. Keep it up Sid...!

Outside the FLN hideout and ready to 'bug' the phones.

Can you really believe that a Countach is as inconspicuous as a Datsun?

pursuit cars with varying speeds, handling and levels of conspicuously. Pursuit is depicted via large map to the left, displaying all the locations you've visited. To the right are two smaller, scrolling windows, the lower showing a more detailed map and the upper, a 3-D representation of the cars. Having reached your destination a menu of options is displayed, (depending on your state of play – practise or otherwise). During this section you also have the ability to arrest subjects, but be wary that they don't become too aware of your presence beforehand – or you may become the hunted.

Cryptography involves simply deciphering a message sent by an opposing organisation. This is achieved by entering the letter you wish to decipher, followed by your chosen alternative. Once completed, the translated message will invariably reveal clues necessary to the completion of your mission.

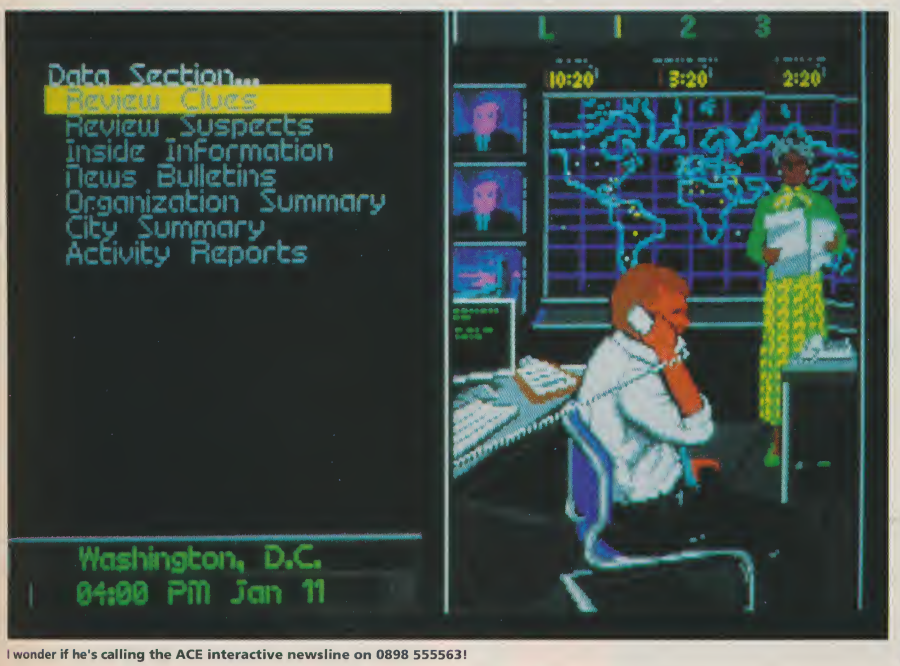
Finally, the electronics section involves studying a partially connected circuit linked to either a wiretap or a car tracer and several alarms. The objective is obvious – connect the active current to either a tap or a tracer without setting off an alarm. A time limit is imposed, after which an approaching guard will deter your attempts. Tapping phones is a necessity as regards gathering information, whereas car tracing proves useful when following a suspect.

Besides each of the four major sections, *Covert Action* includes dozens of additional scenes, locations, possible actions and inter-linking requirements, giving the player enormous tactical scope. These include observation, (a menu from which any of the major skills may be reached) where you may watch a suspected building or suspect, and Intelligence, giving you the ability to scan local and international reports, accuse double-agents or access a crime chronology making collating evidence easy, as it is all stored by your assistant with whom you may liaise.

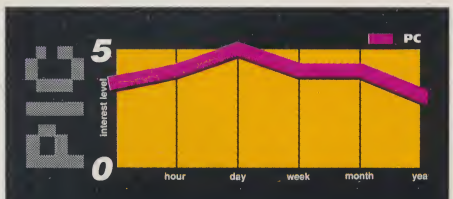
Each of the organisations encountered will have agents and branches throughout the World making travel vital, whether inter-state or inter-continental. Once having reached a destination, play continues as normal.

Complexity of gameplay has become synonymous with the Microprose name, something that *Covert Action* has bountiful supplies of. The choice of options provide a depth of play rarely seen. A choice of four skill levels, three mission areas (Middle East, Europe of the Americas), three basic crime-orientations (espionage, international crime or terrorism) and over a dozen of enemy operatives (at least half a dozen of which will be involved with each crime), *Covert Action* is a game that will take many hours of play to successfully complete.

● Alex Ruranski

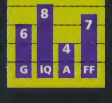


I wonder if he's calling the ACE interactive newsline on 0898 555563!



Initial impressions may vary slightly depending upon your machine, but once realising the complexity and depth, not to mention the potential for hours of play, *Covert Action* should have you playing for some considerable time – even after that all important year. A game that is worth the asking price.

ACE RATING **902**



PC

Even running at its lowest capacity the game is pleasing to both eyes and ears. The various interlude and actual game screens keep interest high. Sound on the review version was somewhat grating, but the option for silence is given. *Covert Action* is one of the best espionage titles on the PC.

RELEASE DETAILS

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No other versions planned

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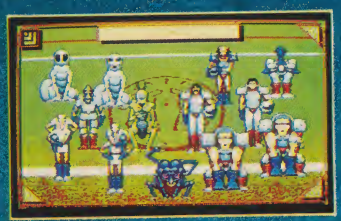

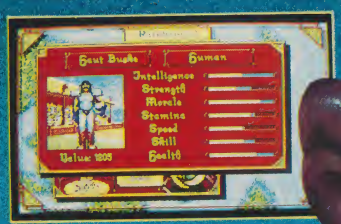

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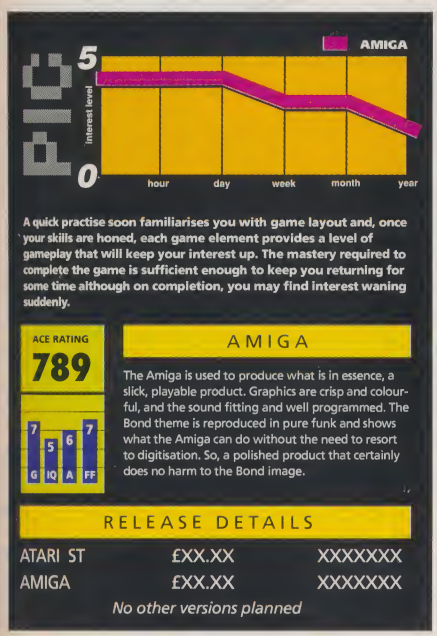
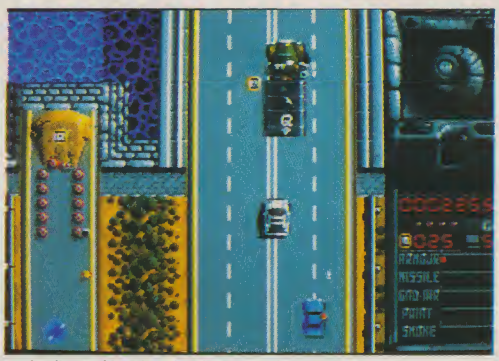
THE SPY WHO LOVED ME

Find yourself shaken AND stirred as you go undercover with DOMARK'S' latest licence

Set over six scenes inspired by game genres ranging from *Spyhunter* to the more recent *Xenon 2* and *Op Wolf*, the latest Bond tie-in from Domark brings one of the secret agent's most famous escapades to the small screen in pixel perfect form.

Following the original plot, Bond and Soviet agent Anya Amasova must confront nuclear sub kidnapper Karl Stromberg in his underwater fortress Atlantis. Each scene is introduced by a seriously funky rendition of the Bond theme and a briefing. For starters, you control the famous white Lotus Esprit; up against the clock, your objective is to reach the boat that is to take you to meet Stromberg.





Under fire and heading for the cover of the Q-Truck...

Q's revolutionary car may carry up to three offensive and three defensive weapons, ranging from a basic machine gun, to ground/air missiles as well as smoke and paint guns for evasive purposes. Decked out with a full complement of hardware, the car is able to unleash some impressive firepower.

Armaments do not come free and, once purchased, diminish with use, but the road ahead is littered with bonuses that may be used to replenish or buy extras. Having reached the waiting boat, play transfers to the water in a similar fashion. Throughout this phase, other vehicles (pedestrians, armoured cars, bikes and the like) hinder your progress on land. On water, you must avoid swimmers, piers and more of Stromberg's agents.

The first part of Scene Two involves more of the same. After getting essential extra hardware that must include underwater capability, you proceed to the second half of the scene – the underwater section, reminiscent of the recent Xenon 2 and equally as difficult! Enemies come in the form of mines, scuba divers and sub-aqua vehicles, the latter of which are particularly lethal.

Scene 3 pits you directly against Stromberg's agents in the first of two Op Wolf style sections as, having infiltrated Atlantis, both Anya and Bond are captured. 007 escapes and, having released the crews from the captured

Protect Bond - Op Wolf style - from marauding enemy agents

subs, mounts a moving security camera in an endeavour to blow a hole in the control room wall. Using a crosshair, you must protect Bond with diminishing ammo (and morale) from attack by dozens of agents.

CODED INTERLUDE

Next there's a code cracking section, where you must decipher a series of shapes in a limited time, allowing Bond to redirect the nuclear missiles towards the sites from which they are to be launched – fail, and the nukes take out Moscow and New York.

The penultimate scene has James setting off to save Anya aboard his Q-modified wet bike. Penetrating the defences, Bond reaches the final section and the second of the Op Wolf scenarios. Initially up against more of Stromberg's forces, including the formidable Jaws, Bond must then successfully disable Stromberg whilst carefully avoiding shooting Anya. Succeed here and taste sweet victory!

Graphic detail and good choice of colour make the game a joy to look at and the underwater section is, aesthetically, particularly pleasing. The shooting scenes are well implemented, though the sounds are fairly standard – engines and guns abound. I did, however, particularly like the agonised scream of the pedestrians as you 'accidentally' run them down in the driving sequences.

There are however, two questionable aspects. The code-breaking appears to be something of a filler to break up surrounding scenes and the initial difficulty level is quite high. If you're not a strong player, you might yearn for an easier introduction.

This is, however, Domark's best Bond game to date. It may seem blatantly plagiaristic, but the sources all work very well together. Each section has been introduced at a particular point during the overall structure, giving the player as much variety as possible whilst never becoming disjointed.

● Alex Ruranski

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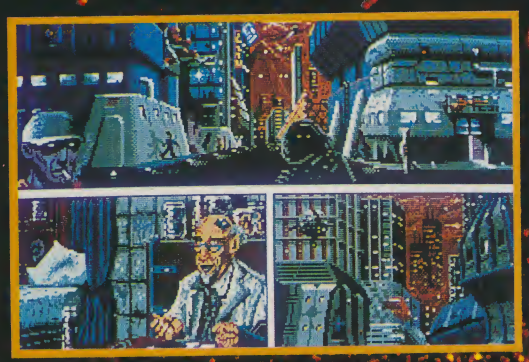
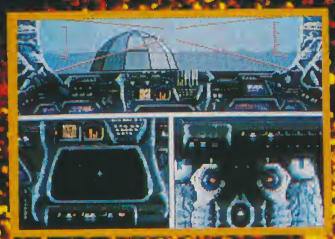


Player interaction gives you the chance not only to participate in the lives of other characters, but to be plunged into the actual city of Terrapolis.



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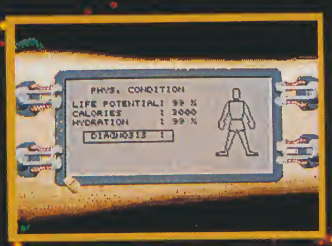

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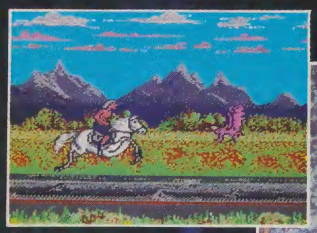
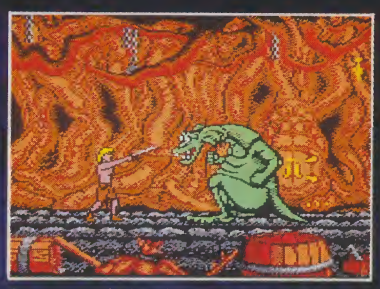


Wrath of the Dragon on C64...

...and ST!



Two guys worked on the C64 version of *Wrath of the Demon*

Rik Haynes leads a bold quest to discover new games from the land of the Maple leaf...

ACE took an in-depth look behind the scenes at Sullivan-Bluth's Dublin-based movie studios back in issue 33. This leading animated-film producer also created the innovative *Dragon's Lair* videodisc arcade game back in the early eighties. Now we've interviewed the people responsible for the computer conversions of *Dragon's Lair* – one of the few Canadian games companies.

ReadySoft was formed over three years ago by David Foster, a veteran of the Commodore PET, VIC-20 and Apple II micros. Before ReadySoft, Foster was an equal partner in Digital Solutions writing productivity software for the C64. "I've always had an interest in games but frequently seemed to end up working with productivity software," sighs Foster. ReadySoft's first product was a C64 emulator for the Amiga, this was followed by the Amiga version of *Dragon's Lair* in 1988. Over the last two years, this Ontario-based company has developed several computer versions of Sullivan-Bluth's *Dragon's Lair* and *Space Ace* videodisc games. In keeping with its roots, ReadySoft has even produced a Macintosh emulator for the Amiga.

CREATIVE FREEDOM

"I like the creative freedom of the games industry," confirms Foster. "You're only limited by your imagination, programming talent and determination."

"We have two styles of games that we are concentrating on: cartoon animation – such as *Dragon's Lair* – and high-end arcade (like the forthcoming *Wrath of the Demon*)."

Foster boldly adds, "We're unlike many companies in that we prefer quality over quantity. We're content with 2-3 high quality releases per year. Future releases will include games that combine *Dragon's Lair*-quality animation with greatly increased playability, and more *Wrath of the Demon* style games with even more graphics, variety and gameplay. Six-disk games don't scare us!"

DUNGEONS AND DEMONS

ReadySoft's next release will be *Wrath of the Demon*, an original hack-and-slash'em-up apparently featuring over 1200 frames of animation, more than 100 different monsters, 15-level parallax-scrolling and over two megabytes of graphics.

"After a briefing by the King, you set out in search of the Demon on horseback. At nightfall you encounter goblins who you must defeat. You must rescue a fairy from a dragon, travel through a cave which leads to the swamp which leads to a clearing. The clearing leads to an old tower and a temple where you must battle with monsters that inhabit them to collect items necessary to defeat the Demon. You then reach the Demon's castle which you must explore to reach your ultimate challenge – the Demon itself."

Most of the scenes in *Wrath of the Demon* include a parallax-scrolling scene (where you must defeat a number of monsters, avoid obstacles and collect items) – followed by a fight scene where you must defeat one or more large, intelligent monsters. There are over 100 animated characters, including goblins, elfs, orcs, swamp creatures, snakes, fairies, ghosts, dragons, human-scorpions, gargoyles and demons.

DEMON TECH SPECS

Save game option
Over 13 scenariios
Over 250 adversaries
Over 2Mb of graphics
20 different movements
Over 25 sprites on-screen
15-level parallax-scrolling
Over 550 screens of action
Over 30 different sound-effects
More than 100 colours on-screen
Screen updated 60 times per second
Maximum object size of 300x144 pixels
9 different soundtracks by David Whittaker

One of the attractive splash screens found in *Wrath of the Demon* (ST version shown here)

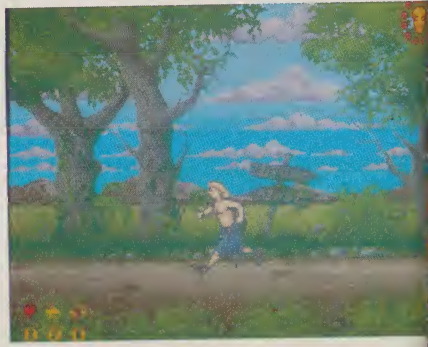
ReadySoft [left to right]: Jorge Freitas (C64 Graphics Conversion), Steve Douglas (C64 Programmer), Claude Peltier (Amiga Graphics), David Foster (President), Pierra Proulx (Amiga Programmer), Ralf Doenich (ST Programmer) and Ulrich Doenich (ST Graphics Conversion).

With *Wrath of the Demon*, ReadySoft's programming and graphics team wanted to make a game that would take advantage of all the capabilities of the Amiga with better graphics, animation and parallax-scrolling than anything previously available. The game was conceived over one year ago and has taken 10 months to complete. ReadySoft sketched the graphics on paper first, then transferred them to computer using an EASYL drawing tablet. The images were then touched-up and completed using *DeluxePaint III*. Creating the mapping system for the monsters and graphics was one of the hardest things to achieve during the game's development. Fitting it all into 512K of memory was also a major frustration.

"We like to think that we're breaking new ground with the sophistication of the graphics and animation, and the 60 frames per second 15-level parallax-scrolling," says Foster. "The best features of *Wrath of the Demon* are the smooth multi-level parallax-scrolling, detailed and smooth character animation, and the large characters and intelligent monsters in the fight scenes – diehard gamers will love the final Demon fight scene!"

Wrath of the Demon will be released on Amiga, ST and PC this month (priced at £29.99dk each). Additionally, a four-disk C64 version is on the cards – although this could turn into a C64 cartridge. Other versions under development include CPC console and Spectrum implementations due early next year.

ReadySoft is also developing the Amiga, ST, PC, Macintosh and Apple IIGS versions of *Dragon's Lair II: Time Warp*. Once upon a time... "Princess Daphne has been spirited away to a wrinkle in time by the evil wizard Mordroc who plans to force her into marriage. Only you, Dirk the Daring, can save her". The next installment of the *Dragon's Lair* saga will be available later this month for the bargain-price of £44.99dk on Amiga, PC and ST. Lead on bold adventurer, your quest awaits!



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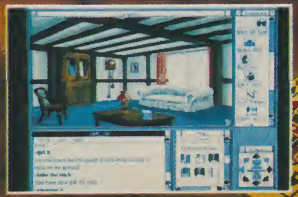

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SHOCKWAVE

This is the first published product from a new coding team called Light Source and has, beyond shadow of a doubt, some of the most impressive sprite-based 3D graphics yet seen on the Amiga. *Afterburner*-like, they give you a true first-person perspective view of high speed travel across four different landscapes, complete with huge items of scenery and a constantly detailed ground surface that flies underneath you at an enormous rate.

You've been placed in charge of one of the largest prison complexes ever built. So large is it, that it could quite easily be mistaken for a small city. Which is exactly what it has been mistaken for by a wandering alien attack force. Your defences are small but effective. A few meagre army units dotted about to slow the onrush of attacking aliens, plus a tiny one-man fighter plane, armed with the weakest of missiles. With this you have to survive ten vicious attack waves?

Well, not quite. These prisoners are quite a resourceful lot, and so is the land you are based upon – split into four quadrants, each is capable of providing one of your four main needs. The mountains house the platinum mines that provide you with £10000 per mine built during every game. With this money you can buy more mines to provide you with even more money. You can also build oil rigs out in the sea quadrant to provide you with fuel for your 'plane, and buy extra army units to place in the jungle for extra protection and create factories in the desert region – to develop and build new and more powerful weapons for your craft.

The only thing you can't do, it seems, is to replenish your ship's already limited shields, which is a bit of a pain when you go out to fight the invading aliens. Before you go out to fight, you choose a quadrant to fly to (see the ALL MAPPED OUT panel), bearing in mind that the more aliens marked on your map, the more you're going to have to kill. You then check the armoury screen to make sure your ship is loaded with the most up-to-date weapons you possess. Remember, your factories are constantly developing new toys for you to play with. Then it's out into the bright, blue yonder for the fight of your life.

The flight scenes take place in one of four daily time zones (morning, afternoon, evening and night) and as the day draws on, your visibility lessens. Obviously flying against invading craft is hardest at night, as to be honest they to have a tendency to blend into the background a fair bit. Flying the plane is a dream. The mouse controls an on-screen cross-hair that serves the dual purpose of both targeting your weapons systems and steering the craft. Things to aim for are the circling aliens. Things to avoid are large ground obstacles, such as buildings, trees and oil rigs, as well as steering clear of, or shooting, enemy missiles that threaten to steal one of your six shields from under your feet. As you work your way through the ten waves of ensuing aliens things get progressively harder. Hold out for long enough, and finally the Calvary will appear. Provided there's anything left for them to rescue, that is.

● Tony Dillon

Digital Magic Software defends its homestead

The main corridor in the prison. Here you have access to the three screens of the game. Note the nice illumination effects as you pass the cursor over the open doors.

The Map Screen (see ALL MAPPED OUT panel).

Flying along the sea quadrant, crashing into the oil rigs is pretty unhealthy. Flying over them is recommended.

ALL MAPPED OUT

The map section of *Shockwave* is where the strategic side of the game takes place. The large disc in the centre is a radar showing the four sections of your world, plus the proximity of the incoming aliens, marked with a red dot. The four icons in the corners of the screen show what purpose each quarter serves, plus the percentage of aliens overrunning the land. The second any of them becomes 99% overrun, you lose that quadrant, plus the service it provides. For example, should you lose the sea sector, your fuel supply is cut off, stopping you from flying out to defend yourself, effectively ending the game. The wait icon advances the game one game turn, increasing your money by a certain amount and moving the aliens inward one step. Clicking on done exits you to a corridor screen, where you can go either to the armoury or to the docking bay, out to the flight sequence.

As the action is instantaneous, you can get in and play straight away. As you get into the game, you begin to learn strategies, lengthening the interest factor. And as it does play so well, there's no reason why you shouldn't continue to keep returning to the game time after time. A very well presented product that plays like a dream.

ACE RATING 875

AMIGA

The fastest sprite-based 3D scrolling yet seen on the Amiga – coupled with some large, detailed sprites make *Shockwave* nothing short of breathtaking. The use of a detailed floor makes a world of difference visually when compared to the usual scrolling stripes or chequered effect. A catchy tune and explosive effects take up the audio side.

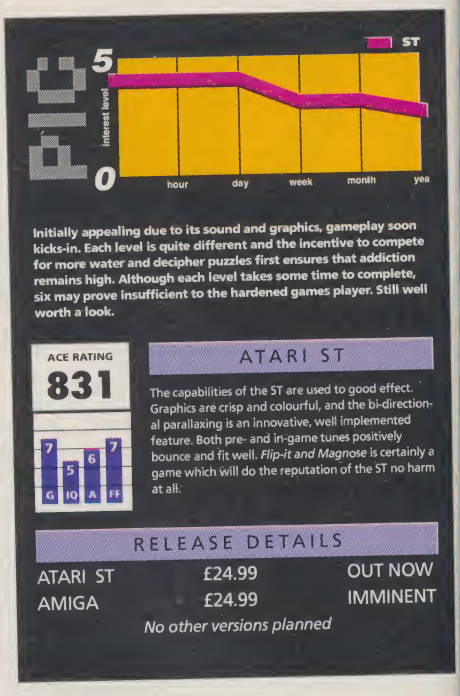
RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£24.99dk	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£24.99dk	December

No other versions planned

Split-screen competitive cutesy from IMAGEWORKS

FLIP IT & MAGNOSE



Initially appealing due to its sound and graphics, gameplay soon kicks-in. Each level is quite different and the incentive to compete for more water and decipher puzzles first ensures that addiction remains high. Although each level takes some time to complete, six may prove insufficient to the hardened games player. Still well worth a look.

ACE RATING **831**

ATARI ST

The capabilities of the ST are used to good effect. Graphics are crisp and colourful, and the bi-directional parallaxing is an innovative, well implemented feature. Both pre- and in-game tunes positively bounce and fit well. *Flip-it and Magnose* is certainly a game which will do the reputation of the ST no harm at all.

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£24.99	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.99	IMMINENT

No other versions planned

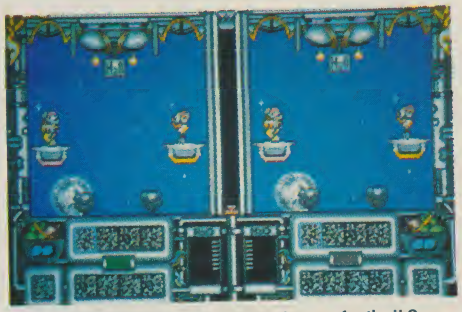
Flip It and Magnose are two lucky guys. Winners of a Martian lottery, they get a trip to Earth and (there's always a bug in the lettuce) an assignment to return with millions of gallons of water for their dehydrated planet. The Martian to return from this vital quest with the most water will become a hero and be awarded two Gargoids – ensuring a life of wealth and ease for many years to come. So goes the plot of Imageworks latest game - the first to be programmed by newcomers Expanding Minds.

Six levels range from a jungle scenario to a farm house and, finally, a space station. Although gameplay is basically the same cute platform variant throughout (played on a vertically split screen), each level differs greatly in puzzle content, with its own specific characters and methods for obtaining H_2O. You can play either a single player game (in which the other character is computer controlled) or a competitive two player scenario. You are also given the option of selecting between in-game music and FX.

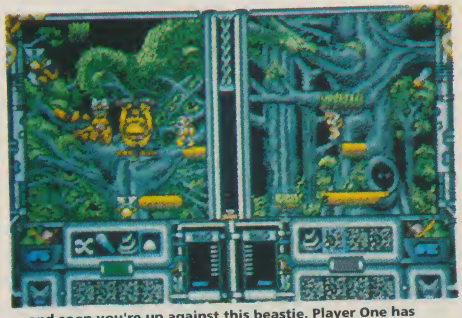
The miserable inhabitants crave something to bring the pzazz! back into their life. Provide for their needs and you will be rewarded with either a droplet of water (which you must catch in a bucket and return to your tele-pad at the top of the screen where it will be beamed aboard your ship), or another object which must be appropriately used.

You'll encounter apes, reptiles, a yeti, a chicken and other strange blobs and although not every one requires an object, those that do are identified by a drop platform (differing from the others) nearby. To save time, Flip-it and Magnose have the ability to carry up to four objects, four weapons and the bucket. Scattered throughout the levels are objects which, although not character-specific, will aid in your quest (such as springs for increasing jump-height). Food is particularly important as it is used to purchase traps for your competitor, giving you a temporary advantage. Once set, however, the traps are non-discriminatory and stumbling into a carefully laid booby of your own will see you temporarily disabled.

Getting started: the option screen is a riot as monsters get their backsides burnt and jab buttons to select your choices



...then you're into the game, each ready to go for the H_2O...



...and soon you're up against this beastie. Player One has found King Kong's cousin and has to drop a pair of nutcrackers onto the 'drop platform' – the small triangular feature below the gorilla. In return he gives you a 'bug' which you have to take to the frog, who will spit out a droplet of water

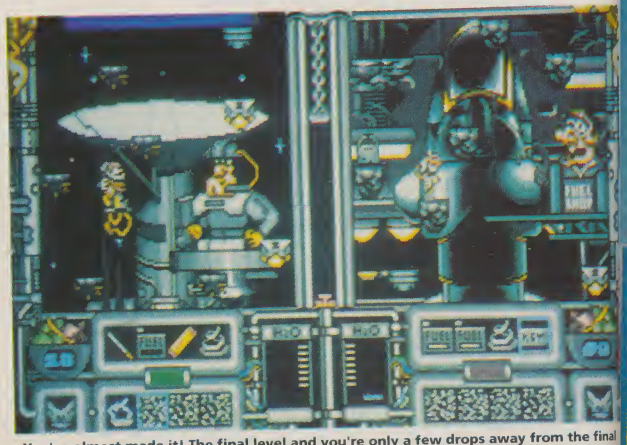
SCROLLING EAUVATION

Movement is straightforward, progress being made by a series of jumps and mid-air manoeuvres. Miss a footing and your character will be sent hurtling downwards to concertina on landing, losing you valuable food. The natives get restless too - the gorilla hurls nuts at you, while the second-level yeti drops rocks, for example. Although the heroes do not rely on energy, there is an imposed time limit indicated by a descending chain in the centre of the split-screen display (both of which move completely independently of one another). Aside from this, the display is constructed from a panel of 'objects held' boxes, accessed by holding down fire.

Each sprite is humorously and well designed in cartoon fashion - colour is used to good effect and animation well executed. What is most striking about the game, is the fact that the parallaxed background extends to both the horizontal AND vertical - an achievement!

In essence, *Flip-it and Magnose* is a platform derivative with what are described as 'several new twists'. The puzzles are entertaining and although occasionally a trifle quirky are never too obscure. Sound complements the game to a tee and the only real quibble I have is that, once practised, six levels may not be enough. Otherwise Expanding Minds have produced an addictive, professional game bringing a fresh breath to the platform genre.

● Alex Ruranski



You've almost made it! The final level and you're only a few drops away from the final screen. Lack of extended challenge is the only serious weak point of the game

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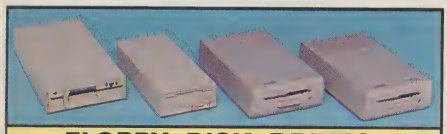
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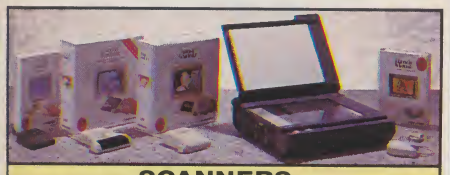
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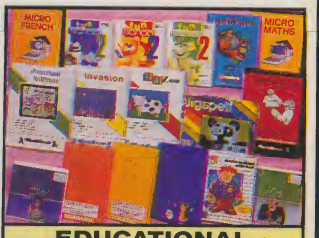
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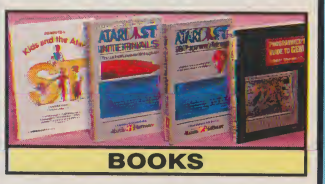
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SUBBUTEO

Programmed by Goliath and published by Electronic Zoo, *Subbuteo* bursts onto the screen accompanied by an original jingle and pictures bearing the obligatory official Subbuteo logo. You get the choice of playing either a single or league game. Single matches allow play against either a human or computer opponent and serve mainly as a practice ground for honing control skills. Once competent, the league (in which eight teams compete for dominance) awaits.

Having selected game type, the option is given to specify the time played over each half (up to 45 minutes) and one of three skill levels (novice, league and international), followed by a choice of kit colours. The final option before play gives you five team formation choices (see screenshots).

The pitch and players themselves are represented in 3D. What is innovative about this particular approach is that the pitch is moveable through 360 degrees and includes the vertical plane. Goliath have also incorporated a zoom feature to allow close inspection of both your and the opposing players - useful for planning strategies.

The game is controlled via icons situated along the bottom of the screen. These allow pitch manipulation, zoom and (most importantly) shot direction and strength, to be directly controlled. Having selected a player, clicking on the ball icon opens a window displaying the base of a Subbuteo figure and a finger. Clicking the mouse button sets the finger moving, whereby a second click stops it in the desired position. Once both flick-angle and strength have been set, the action is carried out in glorious 3D.

Play is governed by the "official" rules laid out according to F.I.S.A (Football International Subbuteo Association), differing somewhat from those of the F.A. These rules are accessible either in full or for specific manoeuvres by clicking on an icon of the pitch to the far right of the panel. All moves are covered and any made illegally are accompanied by a whistle and players being returned to their original positions. Moves covered include deadball, defending and positioning flicks. In essence the only differing rules are those such as disallowing shots from beyond a certain point (the shooting zone), repositioning players under certain circumstances, treating players that have left the pitch as though they are still in play and allowing only a limited time for each shot.

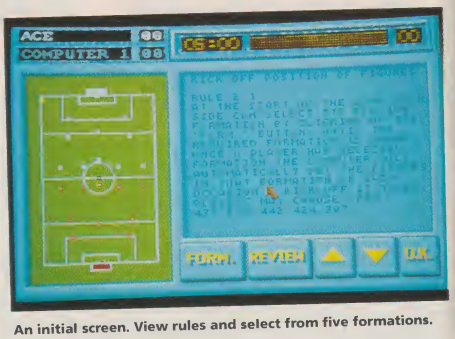
Whilst the rules themselves are fairly simple to understand (provided you have the patience to read them all), competent control of the players is considerably harder to master. The first few shots (if not games) will be spent sending players curving wildly off on unlikely trajectories, but once mastered shots may be fairly accurately judged.

Unusual representation works well and the ability to rotate the pitch through almost every angle is both innovative and excellently implemented, (the original version ran at 7 frames per second, and has been increased to 15 frames per second). Use of icons for manipulation provides the speed necessary when against the clock, giving a feeling of assistance rather than hindrance, so encouraging further play.

Whilst graphics are noteworthy, the same cannot be said for sound, which although tuneful at the outset, is confined (in game) to a warning whistle.

Transferring Subbuteo to computer format could have been disastrous. An idea that has been confined to tabletops for almost half a century is surely unlikely to survive the change. Having never been a fan of the tabletop (or even football proper), I was surprised to find myself enjoying Subbuteo. Initial inaccuracy fairly soon gave way to competent shooting and, as I imagine this will be the case for most players, Subbuteo should provide an alternative to the many football sims that swamp the market.

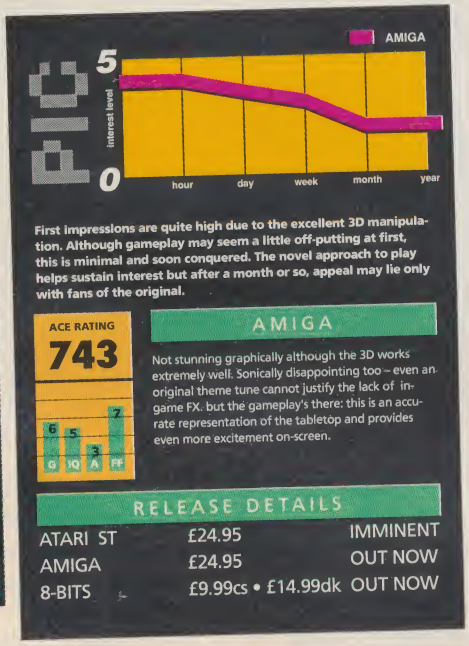
● Alex Rurans



An initial screen. View rules and select from five formations.

Eye in the sky. The tilt option allows full and partial overhead play.

ELECTRONIC ZOO bring out a novel footy game that should have been programmed by Colonel Sanders...



First impressions are quite high due to the excellent 3D manipulation. Although gameplay may seem a little off-putting at first, this is minimal and soon conquered. The novel approach to play helps sustain interest but after a month or so, appeal may lie only with fans of the original.

ACE RATING **743**

AMIGA

Not stunning graphically although the 3D works extremely well. Sonically disappointing too – even an original theme tune cannot justify the lack of in-game FX. but the gameplay's there: this is an accurate representation of the tabletop and provides even more excitement on-screen.

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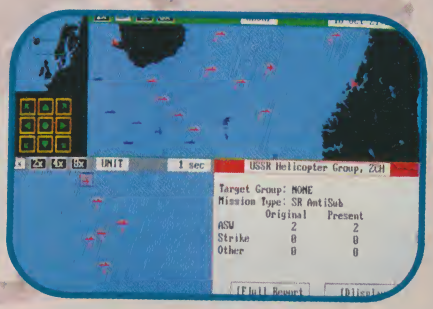
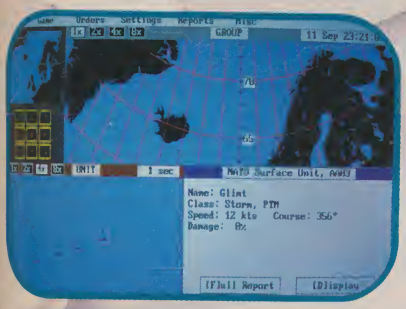
Having zoomed out as far as you can go - just look at that panorama.

HARPOON

Somewhere in the desolate and freezing wastes of the North Atlantic, between Iceland and the Kola Peninsula, a Soviet battle fleet is lurking, ready to pounce on its prey.

As NATO Task Force Commander you must deploy your fleet of submarines, ships and aircraft to locate, engage and defeat the Kremlin's finest.





Produced by LARRY BOND the Naval Analyst, HARPOON portrays the superpower's final confrontation. Now it's up to you.

With graphics that make everything else look like finger painting and an arsenal of weaponry that comes up to your armpits. HARPOON'S non-stop action, relentless intensity and chilling responsibility will leave you gasping.

It's more than a mere game – it's a current event!!

Available now on PC.

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